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Ralph Wormeley V of Rosegill: A deposed Virginia aristocrat, 1774–1781

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RALPH WORMELEY V OF ROSEGILL:
A DEPOSED VIRGINIA ARISTOCRAT, 1744-1781

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

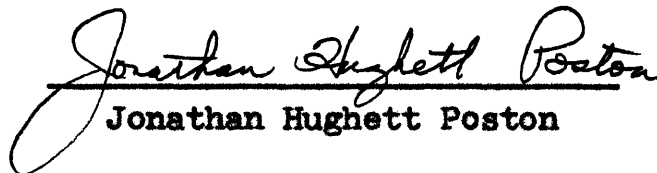
by
Jonathan H. Poston

1979

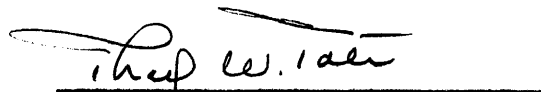
APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts


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Approved, August 1979


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PREFACE

Most people with even a prodigious interest in Virginia history are not familiar with Ralph Wormeley V of Rosegill. Although he was well-known to some nineteenth-century historians, such as Dr. Lyon G. Tyler and Hugh Blair Grigsby, he has been much neglected in recent years. Perhaps his only popular interpretation was in Williamsburg's outdoor drama The Common Glory, where he was portrayed as an obnoxious fop and described as "a weakish and feminish man of thirty-five or forty-five."

Wormeley, however, deserves much more consideration. His English education, ambitions for power in colonial government, and well-defined philosophical loyalism make him an indispensable figure in any detailed study of colonial and revolutionary Virginia. The family's plantation at Rosegill and a few scattered furnishings stand as the only tangible reminders of their wealth and influence. This thesis attempts to delineate Wormeley's early life and loyalism and is a companion to an architectural and social history of Rosegill, written by the author while serving as an intern with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

I wish to thank the staffs of the Colonial Williamsburg Research Library, Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, Swem Library at the College of William and Mary, and the Virginia State Library for their invaluable aid. I particularly wish to

thank present and former staff members of the Virginia Historical Society, where my interest in Ralph Wormeley V began four years ago, including John Jennings, Howson Cole, William M. E. Rachal, James A. Fleming, Waverly Winfree, Susan A. Riggs, E. Lee Shepard, and Mrs. Kenneth W. Southall.

A number of other persons have offered helpful criticisms of the manuscript or important research suggestions. They include Thad W. Tate, John M. Hemphill II, Paul Buchanan, J. Douglas Smith, Charles Royster, Graham Hood, George M. Curtis III, Darrett and Anita H. Rutman, Cary Carson, Edward Ayres, Catherine Schlesinger, Elizabeth Crowell, Karen Stuart, Cynthia Carter, Nancy M. Merz, and Jane Carson. Charles and Polly Longworth, current occupants of Rosegill, graciously allowed me unlimited access to the plantation so that I might absorb the atmosphere in which the Ralph Wormeleys lived.

I am particularly grateful for the assistance of Ralph Wormeley V's descendants. His great-great-granddaughters Elizabeth Williams Gookin of Middleburg, Virginia, and Anne Williams Britton of San Francisco, California, gave me access to numerous family impressions and mementos, especially a hitherto unpublished almanac diary kept while Wormeley was confined in Berkeley County from 1776 to 1777. Another Wormeley descendant, Mrs. Bernice Roy Johnson of Williamsburg, provided invaluable genealogical assistance and showed me her extensive notes.

All these sources and assistances have helped produce a

partial biography of a man who deserves resurrection. His story should help historians delineate the actions and thoughts of all of Virginia's isolated but important loyalists.

My primary gratitude for the completion of this thesis must go to my parents who have encouraged and supported me throughout my years of college and graduate school. To them this little volume is dedicated.

ABSTRACT

This study is intended to provide a detailed examination of the early life, government service, and loyalist career of Ralph Wormeley V of Rosegill in Virginia. The first chapter of the thesis presents a brief history of the powerful Wormeley family in Virginia and how its members established, within a short time of their arrival in 1635, a baronial tradition. They were part of a special upper elite, and when Ralph V was born, he received almost hereditary rights to political office in the Virginia colony. His education at Eton and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, provided him with an excellent political and literary training as well as powerful friends in London society.

The second chapter examines Wormeley's life after his arrival home in 1765 and how he used his training and connections to attain an appointment to the council at the age of twenty-seven. On the council he took a definite leadership role and developed a friendship with Virginia's last royal governor, the Earl of Dunmore. Although he was well-informed of the issues of the impending revolution, Wormeley remained firmly committed to the crown. His background had caused his mind to sympathize more with the "court" than "country" and his views became increasingly distinctive from those of other Virginians.

During the last days before Dunmore's flight from Williamsburg, Wormeley made known his intense loyalism. The third chapter analyzes the implications of his tory views and his truly philosophical attachment to the government of Great Britain. Although guilty of no overt actions against Virginia, he was condemned to a severe and expensive exile to the western part of the state from 1776 to 1778. He attempted to remain quiet upon his return to Rosegill but the plundering of the plantation in 1781 again forced his toryism into the open. Ralph V briefly reentered state government between 1787 and 1796 but he never regained his former status. Plagued by personal tragedy and a declining fortune, he died a bitter and demoralized man in 1806.

The case of Ralph Wormeley V proves that there was a true revolution in Virginia. A very small group held the reins of power and wealth before the war, but they were nearly destroyed by the time it had ended. The almost total neglect of Wormeley and other isolated, but prominent, Virginia loyalists by historians, illustrates the need to reevaluate the implications of the American Revolution in the Old Dominion.

Ralph Wormeley V (1744-1806), from the
original portrait painted in England
by Robert Edge Pine (Collection of
the Virginia Historical Society)



RALPH WORMELEY V OF ROSEGILL:

A DEPOSED VIRGINIA ARISTOCRAT, 1744--1781

CHAPTER I

THE TOP OF VIRGINIA'S OLD ORDER

[I have] . . . long been intimately acquainted with Mr. Ralph Wormeley of the Colony of Virginia and know him to be of the first rank and fortune of that country.

-- Admiral Samuel Barrington¹

Ralph Wormeley V is often briefly mentioned as one of the most prominent Tories in Colonial Virginia. Although on the surface he seems remarkably like many of the leading patriots: wealthy, well-educated in England, and active in colonial government, he took a position opposite to most of his peers during the American Revolution. Wormeley is more than an anomaly in a fiercely revolutionary colony. There were certain characteristics of his background, youth in England, and overall personality which caused him to see the issues of America's rebellion with the mother country in a totally different light.

The Wormeley family until the 1770s probably held the reins of wealth and rank more consistently than any family in Virginia. The first member of the family to arrive in the colony was Captain Christopher Wormeley, a former governor of Tortuga and a member of a prominent gentry family seated at Adwick-le-Street and Riccal Manor in Yorkshire.² By 1635 Christopher Wormeley was settled in York County and by 1638 he had received a patent of 1,420 acres

bounded on the north by the body of water already known as Wormeley's Creek.³ Captain Wormeley served as a justice of York County and as a member of the Governor's Council until his death in about 1643.

Since Christopher left no legitimate male heir, his brother Ralph inherited the bulk of his estate.⁴ Ralph served as a member of the House of Burgesses, and in 1650 he too was appointed to the Governor's Council by Charles II, then in exile at Breda.⁵ Ralph continued to live at his brother's plantation in York County at least until 1649 when Colonel Henry Norwood visited him there and found a number of royalists "feasting and carousing."⁶ It was in that same year that Ralph Wormeley patented 3,200 acres in Middlesex County and probably established Rosegill Plantation on the site.⁷ He was married to Agatha Eltonhead Stubbins, a powerful woman in her own right and one of four daughters of the royalist General William Eltonhead of "Eltonhead" in Surrey. The Eltonhead bloodline underlies most early Virginia families although the surname has disappeared.⁸ Ralph Wormeley died in 1651 and bequeathed to his wife Agatha houses, land, plate, jewels, goods, household stuff, horses, mares, tobacco, negroes, English servants, and other estate in the counties of York and Lancaster.⁹

In about 1635 Agatha Wormeley married Sir Henry Chicheley, a former royalist and member of a wealthy London family. The couple took up residence at Rosegill along with Agatha's surviving son Ralph II. Although he was not a man of keen intelligence, Chicheley served in various posts prior to his death in 1683, including two

terms as lieutenant governor.¹⁰ During Chicheley's occupancy, Rosegill became a center of governmental activity, a characteristic it would retain for generations to come. Christ Church Parish of Middlesex was founded at a meeting at Rosegill on January 29, 1667.¹¹

Obviously the first Wormeleys had little difficulty establishing themselves in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake. Their connections to the gentry in England and previous positions of leadership immediately elevated them to prominence in the 1630s. Louis Wright has pointed out that "the Wormeleys by anybody's standard were of genteel origin and they had already reached the top of the social and political ladder in Virginia by the time the second Ralph inherited Rosegill."¹² Not only did the Wormeleys quickly attain high status, but they became one of the colony's oldest families and one of the most successful in maintaining their position. Bernard Bailyn found them unusual in this regard observing that "with a few notable exceptions like the Scarboroughs and the Wormeleys, these struggling planters of the first generation [in the 1620s and 1630s] failed to perpetuate their leadership into the second generation"¹³ (see Appendix I).

Ralph Wormeley II, who took up his inheritance of Rosegill plantation and other lands upon reaching his majority in 1671, continued to uphold the prominence of the family. He had been one of the first native-born Americans to study at Oxford, matriculating at Oriel College on July 14, 1665. He was a member of the House of Burgesses in 1674, was appointed to the Governor's Council in 1677,

and became secretary of state in 1693.¹⁴ In the same year Governor Edmund Andros nominated him as the president of the council and during Andros' absence Wormeley performed the duties of the governorship.¹⁵

A visiting Huguenot refugee, Durand de Dauphine, has left the best account of Ralph Wormeley II. Durand came to Rosegill to visit the governor, Lord Howard of Effingham, who was in residence there to escape the unhealthy conditions of Jamestown and of his own plantation on the York River. The young Huguenot found that Wormeley lived in a grand style, owning twenty-six negro slaves and twenty Christian servants. He disapproved, however, of the social activities at Rosegill, including the gambling parties which lasted all night and the very strong Portuguese wines that were served. Even after he diluted the wine with water, Durand still considered it "as strong as the best wine we have in France undiluted."¹⁶

Ralph II, nevertheless, was not a wastrel cavalier. He accumulated one of the largest libraries in the colonies, containing well over four hundred volumes.¹⁷ It has been theorized that he wrote "An Essay Upon the Government of the English Plantations on the Continent of America," which was published in London in 1701.¹⁸ This devotion to literature was an important quality which Ralph Wormeley V inherited from his ancestor. The future Wormeleys also received from Ralph II a legacy of wealth and power. Secretary Wormeley's influence pervaded all levels and institutions. He provided the land on which the port town of Urbanna was built in 1681, and during much of his life he attempted to treat Middlesex

County as something of a family barony.¹⁹ It is believed that Wormeley greatly abused his powers as secretary and president of the council and his acquisition of certain important parcels of land are a testament to the accuracy of this charge.²⁰ Although he was a founding trustee of the College of William and Mary, this fact did not prevent him from seizing the college's promised tract of land in Pamunkey Neck.²¹ The college's president, Commissary James Blair, and two other men recorded with resentment that Wormeley was "the Greatest Man in the Government, next to the Governor."²²

At Secretary Wormeley's death in 1701, the tedious job of administering his estate, with personal property valued at more than £2800, fell to his kinsmen and friends Edmund Jenings, Thomas Corbin, William Armistead, Gawin Corbin, Jr., Edwin Thacker, and Robert "King" Carter.²³ Carter also reluctantly supervised the interests of young Ralph and John Wormeley, who were studying in England. He fretted over their extravagances and said of young Ralph that "too long a taste of the town may do him harm."²⁴ Mrs. Elizabeth Wormeley remarried in 1703 and the administration of her late husband's estate increasingly fell under the dubious supervision of her new husband Colonel William Churchill. Following King Carter's warnings about Churchill, the sons finally returned and saved their inheritance at Rosegill, although Carter noted that the "Equipment" they brought back was "too extravagant."²⁵

Thus the third generation of Wormeleys do not completely fit the family pattern. Various circumstances prevented the

maintenance of their governmental power and prestige, although they essentially retained their social position. Ralph Wormeley III was fond of engaging in the pursuits of other young men of his generation. William Byrd noted in his diary in 1712 that he was among the young gentlemen taken before Theodorick Bland to answer for "a riot committed last night at Su Allens."²⁶ Ralph Wormeley III might, in fact, have proved outstanding in the colonial government, as he was a conscientious sheriff of Middlesex and member of the county court, but he died young and unmarried in 1713.²⁷ He left all of his property to his brother John, with the exception of Nanzatico Plantation in Richmond County, which he willed to his sister Judith Page of Rosewell.²⁸

John Wormeley remains the most obscure forbear of Ralph Wormeley V. He seems to have had no desire for public office and generally refused to accept his continuous appointments to the county court. After being a losing defendant in several cases, he did finally accept his position on the commission of peace in 1723.²⁹ John Wormeley married the prominent heiress Elizabeth Ring of Ringfield Plantation in York County. He had the responsibility of supervising his family lands in Gloucester, Middlesex, King William, York, Caroline, and King George Counties, and of overseeing as well his wife's extensive properties at Ringfield and Ring's Quarter in King and Queen County.³⁰ He did maintain active ties among his ruling connections. William Byrd described a large gathering of several days duration at Rosegill in 1720:

I went with John Wormeley in his chariot to his house where we got about one and about two dined and I ate some boiled beef. After dinner we walked about the plantation which is very pretty and then played at billiards and I lost about ten shillings. At night we drank about a pint of rack punch apiece and about 11 o'clock retired and I was forced to lie with Dr. Blair because there was abundance of company in the house.³¹

Wormeley produced ten children by his wife Elizabeth, but like his brother, he died at a relatively young age. His impressive funeral on February 7, 1727, was described in detail by "King" Carter who noted that the huge procession included five coaches and one calash.³² John Wormeley had not decreased his family's prestige but he had followed a different path. His tombstone noted in Latin that he was "never eager for public office: he was naturally content with the calm of his ancestral home."³³

The home of the Wormeleys at Rosegill was the center of their power. Durand de Dauphine thought on first glance that there was a village on the site and he commented that Ralph Wormeley II owned "at least twenty houses in a lovely plain along the Rappahannock River."³⁴ These buildings included facilities for extensive dairying and blacksmithing, a large store, and a fort. The latter had been erected by the colony, and it was outfitted with the Secretary's own large collection of arms and with five brass guns and two mortars belonging to the government.³⁵ The house was furnished with over seventy cane, leather, and upholstered chairs, elegant looking glasses, curtained bedsteads, and a vast amount of plate.³⁶ By 1720 John Wormeley had added several new brick buildings including a hall-parlor plan house

and several substantial outbuildings. The new house may have been joined to the older seventeenth-century dwelling and thus created the massive building in which William Byrd played on a billiard table and was forced to sleep with Commissary Blair.³⁷ Rosegill's associations made it a social center of the colony and later, under the tenure of Ralph Wormeley IV, the early character of the estate would be augmented by a new Georgian elegance.

The fourth Ralph Wormeley to own Rosegill was born on October 5, 1715. He was partially educated at the College of William and Mary and probably studied in England as well.³⁸ Nonetheless, he was back in Virginia by his age of majority, accepted his estate, and married his kinswoman Salley Berkeley of Barn Elms, whom the Virginia Gazette termed "a young lady of great Beauty and Fortune."³⁹ Salley Wormeley died in 1741 leaving only one child, Judith, who would eventually marry Dudley Digges of York County. Less than a year after her death, Ralph IV was described by John Lewis as "making his addresses to Miss Bowles of Maryland."⁴⁰ He eventually married Jane Bowles who was the eldest daughter and principal heiress of James Bowles of "Sotterley" in St. Mary's County, Maryland.⁴¹ Jane joined her two younger sisters who were already married and living in Virginia. Mary Bowles had married William Armistead of "Hesse" in Gloucester County, while the other sister, Eleanor, had married William Gooch, Jr., the only son of Virginia's royal governor. No description of the young Jane Bowles has survived, but Governor Gooch's description of her sister may suffice: "I can't perhaps say she is the prettiest woman I ever saw,

yet she is the finest shape, well bred and has good sense, and is about seventeen."⁴² Thus the Wormeleys were allied to a Maryland family of wealth and once more to a royal governor of Virginia.

The reestablishment of the family connection with the Virginia government coincided with Ralph Wormeley IV's election to the House of Burgesses. He served as a burgess for Middlesex County for thirty-three sessions between May 1742 and January 1764.⁴³ Although he accepted the duties which his father had refused, Ralph Wormeley did not become an outstanding leader in the House. His most notable moment occurred during the early part of Governor Robert Dinwiddie's term when he sought to insure the good will of the cantankerous Dinwiddie by moving that the burgesses present him with a gift of £500. Such presents were forbidden and Landon Carter and Edmund Pendleton fought against the payment. However, Wormeley was victorious and Dinwiddie pocketed £500.⁴⁴ Ralph was also a justice of the Middlesex County Court, filling several terms between 1745 and 1768.⁴⁵ He was active in the affairs of Christ Church Parish, which the family had continually endowed since its formation by Chicheley and others at Rosegill. He served on the vestry at various times beginning in 1736.⁴⁶ During his tenure Bartholomew Yates was the minister and the parish distributed salaries and poor relief totalling as much as 38,000 pounds of tobacco annually.⁴⁷

However, unlike the rest of his forbears, Ralph IV did not occupy Rosegill during his early manhood. His mother apparently received a life tenancy in much of the plantation through his father's

will, and she continued to live there until her death in 1761.⁴⁸ He instead purchased property in Urbanna and built a two-story brick house that was later called "Landsdowne." He was living there by 1742 when he purchased several more lots adjoining his dwelling.⁴⁹ Although he most assuredly supervised the planting of the family lands at Rosegill, Wormeley's Creek, and in King William County, and the huge tract which he had recently purchased in Frederick County,⁵⁰ Ralph Wormeley IV seems to have been more involved in the thriving mercantile activities of Urbanna. The town was filled with Scottish merchants and ships arriving from many ports. It is not surprising that a woman in Norfolk would write to John Norton in 1768 that Ralph Wormeley and William Allen were among the greatest shippers in the colony.⁵¹

Wormeley's thriving business interests did not, however, relieve him from the burden of his family's growing debts. The obligations left to him by his father forced him to sell a number of significant properties. In order to pay his sisters' inheritances, he had to sell his remaining one thousand acres at "Portobago" in Caroline County and a two thousand acre plantation in King George County that was known as "Cleves."⁵² The sales only temporarily alleviated his problems and debts began to mount, including that of £823 to the Robinson estate.⁵³

Despite his cares and responsibilities, Ralph Wormeley IV was interested in the typical pleasures of the Virginia gentry. In 1745 he was one of thirty-one subscribers who purchased the

Williamsburg Theater.⁵⁴ Fairfax Harrison, the historian of the Virginia turf, said that "he eschewed politics and spent his time at home in those traditional pursuits of an English country gentleman, agriculture and horsebreeding."⁵⁵ Apparently while Wormeley was in England for his education, he saw hunting and horse-racing, and thus was inspired to import English blooded horses.⁵⁶ The first important horse brought into the colonies, Jolly Roger, was owned by Ralph IV. He also imported the foundation mare, Mary Grey, believed to have had seven filly foals by Jolly Roger.⁵⁷ Wormeley was then the founder of a pastime traditionally associated with the Virginia aristocracy.

By the time that Ralph Wormeley V was born, probably at his father's house in Urbanna in 1744, his family had established an almost baronial tradition in a new land.⁵⁸ Ralph V was the eldest of seven-known children born to Jane Bowles Wormeley, but other facts about his childhood in Urbanna remain obscure. He probably accompanied his father to supervise the farming in York and King William Counties and accompanied both his parents on their lengthy social visits to relatives at Hewick, Belle Farm, Hesse, Sabine Hall, Mount Airy, Mount Pleasant, Sotterley, and other plantations in Virginia and Maryland. He undoubtedly spent time at Rosegill with his grandmother as well. While they were at home, though, his parents must have been preoccupied, his father absorbed in business and government matters, and his mother busy at the tasks expected of a model Virginia matron. A traveling Unitarian minister met Jane Wormeley in 1793 and described her in the following way:

I breakfasted with Mrs. Wormeley, a fine old lady who seems to have superintended the economy of a large family in a very able and active manner. Under her direction they have been in the habit of manufacturing for their own use calicoes, striped cottons, for gowns, counterpanes, petticoats, woolen goods, linen and bedticking.⁵⁹

Ralph and Jane Wormeley's social position might have made them doting parents, but their responsibilities probably caused them, like many Virginians, to demand much discipline from their children.⁶⁰ The only true records of Wormeley's childhood are visual. Ralph V and his parents were painted by John Wollaston during the artist's lengthy excursion through Virginia in the 1750s. The portrait of young Ralph shows him in an elaborately embroidered, plum-colored coat, and the expression on his face indicates that, even at a young age, he was precociously aware that being painted by Wollaston was "the epitome of sophistication and fashion."⁶¹

By the time his portrait was painted, Ralph V, or Ralph Wormeley, Jr., as he was called, had undoubtedly begun his education. He might have studied under the guidance of the Reverend Bartholomew Yates, whose father, the previous rector of Christ Church Parish, had educated the local planters' children.⁶² It is most probable that by the mid-eighteenth century, though, planters like the elder Wormeley would have hired a private tutor to educate their children. Francis Hargreaves served as a tutor for the Wormeleys' relatives, the Churchills, at nearby "Wilton" in the 1770s and described the "fraternity" of a dozen predecessors in his position: "They were certainly a vile set. One us'd to ramble about the Country Drunk,

for three weeks or a month together. Another talked bawdy to the young ladies, one was a Lyar, another a thief and a third a composition of both, nay one was absolutely non compos mentis."⁶³ Whatever the manner of his early schooling, a decision was made to follow a family tradition and send young Wormeley to England when he reached the age of twelve. Ralph Wormeley V entered Eton on September 12, 1757, at the most auspicious time in its history.⁶⁴ From 1754 to 1765 the headmaster of the school was the noted Edward Barnard. During Barnard's tenure the enrollment of the institution increased from three hundred to five hundred and none of the customary student riots or rebellions occurred.⁶⁵ Wormeley himself admired Barnard and felt in later life that he had greatly advanced the school's reputation.⁶⁶ Ralph Wormeley's dame at Eton was a Mrs. Barnardiston who lived at No. 4, Baldwin's Shore. Mrs. Barnardiston left in 1758 and was succeeded as the young Virginian's dame by a Miss Arden.⁶⁷ Although there are no surviving accounts of Wormeley's debts to his dame, there are such records for Alexander and John Spotswood's expenses owed to Mrs. Mary Young who kept the "Manor House" at Eton. For the half-year ending July 8, 1762, the bill for these Virginians totalled over £108 including the costs of candles, postman, bellman, haircutting, medical expenses, coach hire at Easter and election, allowance, chamber fires, mending, board, shoes, and fees for instruction and other services.⁶⁸ Wormeley's basic schooling charge, though, was probably only about £4 4s. per year.⁶⁹

The young Virginian's studies at the school certainly

emphasized the classics, but Barnard impressed his students with a love of elocution as well.⁷⁰ Ralph also obtained an appreciation of English grammar and French. He would write to his own son that "as to French, it must be cultivated; by knowing it well enough to read and translate English into French, grammatically."⁷¹ Ralph V's classmates at Eton included a number of fellow colonists: Philip and John Randolph Grymes of Middlesex County, Ralph Izard of Charleston, and Daniel Dulany of Maryland.⁷² Wormeley's best English friend was probably Robert D'Arcy Hildyard, whom he often recalled in later life.⁷³ Politically and socially, the Virginian's most valuable friend was Charles James Fox, son of Henry Fox who was created the first Lord Holland in 1763. Young Fox entered Eton in 1758 under the guidance of a private tutor, but during his enrollment he spent at least two extended holidays away from the school, traveling on the Continent with his father. After his second trip to Paris and to Spa, Fox returned to Eton attired in red-heeled shoes, cut-velvet, and blue-powdered hair, and he caused such a commotion that Dr. Barnard is said to have flogged him.⁷⁴ Apparently the young colonist admired the sophistication of Fox and may, despite his later virtuous life, have followed his friend's practices. Lord Chatham believed "Charles Fox had initiated his companions into dissipations beyond their years."⁷⁵ Whatever lack of morality Wormeley may have inbibed at Eton, he was living among the greatest and most talented elite in British society, since the institution supplied more members to the House of Commons than any other school in the eighteenth century.⁷⁶

Upon leaving Eton, Wormeley matriculated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he remained for three years. He again fell into a circle of the very elite from England and the colonies. Robert Beverley had recently been a commoner and a number of other colonists including the Allen brothers of Philadelphia, and Ralph Izard and Arthur Middleton of South Carolina were at other colleges at the University.⁷⁷ Benjamin West painted this group, including Wormeley, on a cricket field at Cambridge in 1763.⁷⁸ Trinity Hall was noted for its scholarship in law and in literature and for having preserved "a more intimate connexion with the outer world."⁷⁹ Lord Howard, Lord Chesterfield, and other politically active men studied at Trinity Hall, so it was appropriate that the first Wormeley to become truly active in the colonial government since 1701 would study there.

While at Cambridge Wormeley was given an allowance tightly supervised by his tutor.⁸⁰ However, he had obviously absorbed some of Fox's fondness for the social amenities, and he did not always live within his means. He loved the "watering places" and thought that they provided "wholesome relaxation" and improvement of one's manners.⁸¹ His relative Edmund Jenings of Middle Temple accompanied him to Bath and lent him a large sum of money. When Wormeley wrote from Virginia about the debt, his kinsman replied:

Be assured I by no means doubt your honor . . .
 If the money I lent you at Bath . . . is of any
 service to you I shall be glad of it. I beg you
 would put yourself to no uneasiness on my account
 -- Pay it whenever it may suit you but without
 interest. The only return I want being your
 Friendship.⁸²

Wormeley completed his studies at Cambridge, and with great reluctance departed England in 1765 and returned to Virginia.

By the 1760s the Wormeleys of Rosegill had distinguished themselves at a level above the rest of Virginia's aristocracy. Five generations of assured position and English education had produced a family that was almost more at home in London society than on their great Rappahannock estate. Ralph Wormeley V sailed for the Virginia coast confident about these things and encouraged by his imperial connections in England. He was determined to make a place for himself in colonial government. It is ironic that he should have begun his pursuit in the year that the news of the Stamp Act reached the colonies. Wormeley was unaware that his fellow Virginians had asserted their right of self-government and had begun a movement that would eventually destroy his possibilities forever.

CHAPTER II

THE PURSUIT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES 1765-1774

Whereas by a vain boasting of these intentions you expose yourself to the ridicule and contempt of the world if your pursuits are unaltered with success, if successful the world is soon enough acquainted with it. These reasons, my D^r. Sir, have always influenced me to proceed reservedly.

Ralph Wormeley to Landon Carter,
June 10, 1768¹

At a relatively young age Ralph Wormeley was filled with ambition for high offices and used every avenue to work towards obtaining them. Even before leaving England he had prepared for his immediate future. Through his continued friendship with Charles James Fox he had secured for himself the position of comptroller of the port of Rappahannock River. His father urged his attempts to obtain a customs position and felt the job would calm his tendencies toward dissipation. As the elder Wormeley explained, "It will be a good thing for a youngster, as it may probably settle him to business much sooner than perhaps he would have thought of any."²

Young Wormeley's arrival in Virginia did indeed have a sobering effect on his extravagant London lifestyle. The family's domestic situation had drastically changed, placing great responsibilities upon him. Ralph V's powerful grandmother was dead

and Rosegill Plantation was once again in the hands of the male Wormeleys. Elizabeth Ring Wormeley left most of her own property in King and Queen County and in York County to her younger son John, but her life tenancies naturally devolved to Ralph IV.³ The elder Wormeley had lost little time in disposing of his mother's household furnishings by public sale and beginning large additions to Rosegill plantation house.⁴ When Ralph V arrived the house had been expanded to a length of eighty-eight feet providing the dwelling with a new, elegantly panelled dining room, a study, a long gallery, and several bedchambers.⁵ The young Cambridge graduate must have immediately realized the increased responsibilities of running Rosegill, along with the family's other plantations and mercantile activities.

Perhaps Wormeley's greatest disappointment, however, lay in not being able to take over his position of comptroller. The commission had actually been sent to his father to act for him until his return, and when he arrived, the royal governor, Francis Fauquier, and the surveyor-general refused to allow him to take over the post.⁶ A recent change in ministry had weakened his leverage in England, so he had no real recourse. Wormeley's English circle, including Lord Holland and other friends, had placed him among the followers of Lord Bute, favorite of George III, and had given him the necessary influence with the King's minister, George Grenville, to obtain the comptroller position. George III temporarily dismissed Grenville but then temporarily reinstated him, after which the minister demanded the resignation of many of Wormeley's acquaintances, especially

Lord Holland.⁷ Grenville's alienation of the followers of Bute and then the formation of the "Old Whig" government under the Earl of Rockingham when Grenville again went out of office in July of 1765, effectively barred the young Virginian from obtaining a new commission for himself. Nonetheless, a pressured Fauquier wrote a letter to the Lords of Trade requesting that the elder Wormeley be allowed to resign the position in favor of his son.⁸ This letter brought no results, and, as late as 1769, the men at Rosegill were still attempting to change the commission for comptroller of the port of Rappahannock River.

Ralph Wormeley V's difficulty is indicative of the political disorder in the reign of George III, and of important developments in the King's Customs Service as well. Since there was little uniformity or proper enforcement of regulations, the service had been in great chaos. Charles Steuart, surveyor-general for the middle district of America, emphasized these problems in a letter to his counterpart in the northern district, John Temple, on June 29, 1765: "It is for the honour of the service that business should be conducted in an uniform, consistent manner in all the ports of America and that fair traders should not be led into mistakes by obtaining clearances in some ports for goods that may be seised and condemned in others."⁹ To rectify these problems, a board of five American customs commissioners was established on September 14, 1767. These men, who included the aforementioned John Temple, set up their headquarters in Boston in November. Within eight months, however, patriot mobs,

who viewed the commissioners as an arbitrary external authority and symbol of the oppression of the Townshend duties, forced them to flee the city and take refuge in a harbor fort.¹⁰ To quell the disturbance four regiments of troops under the command of Major-General Alexander MacKay were dispatched to Boston in September of 1768 and restored sufficient order for the commissioners to return to the city.¹¹

Meanwhile in distant Virginia, the Wormeleys, who had little sympathy with the Boston mobs, sought relief for their problem with the American Board of Customs. Ralph Wormeley IV did not hesitate to write to Temple and attempt to gain his influence to rectify the error of his son's commission.¹² Finally Ralph V went to Boston himself in August of 1769 and explained his situation to the board.¹³ He also attempted to see the commander of the regiments, Major-General MacKay, about his position. Although MacKay, an influential follower of the Duke of Bedford and M. P. for the Tain Burghs, took a real interest in the customs controversies, he was unable to see Wormeley personally.¹⁴ His clerk sent the Virginian the following note:

MG MacKay presents his compts to Mr. Wormsley, he has been prevented from calling of him, by numbers of people come into him this morning, so that he has not had a moment to himself. He begs leave to wish Mr. Wormsley & Mr. Ogle an agreeable Journey and returns Mr. Wormsley his best thanks for the trouble he is so good as take for him and shall be happy to hear from him in England.¹⁵

MacKay was unable to help the young Virginian retrieve his comptroller's commission, although he was later to obtain for him a much better position. For the present, however, Ralph V's ambitions were still frustrated. In September his father was still appealing

to Temple, writing that "I shall be extreemly Oblig'd to you to have your Advice once more How I must proceed to obtain this Point. I am very willing & desirous that my son shou'd have the Place, as it is really his & woud resign it in any Manner you & the other Gentlemen should think proper."¹⁶ Consequently the Wormeleys' power in Virginia did not prevail on this occasion. The muddle of Georgian politics and bureaucracy had triumphed again. Nevertheless, Ralph V probably acted for his father in the comptroller's position as much as possible, gaining valuable insights into the workings of the British customs. The elder Wormeley, since his retirement from the House of Burgesses, spent a great deal of time away from Rosegill, traveling to his other plantations in King William and Frederick Counties and visiting friends such as the Fairfaxes and Washingtons.¹⁷ His son wrote to Landon Carter with some exasperation, "My Father this day set of[f] for Pamunkey, He is so mercurial that one place cannot long contain him."¹⁸ With his father gone, Ralph V was left with the major responsibilities of administering the customs of the Rappahannock with its six port towns and large traffic. In 1769 the district saw the arrival of twenty-three ships, six snows, thirteen brigs, thirty-one schooners, twelve sloops, and the export of 11,765,088 pounds of tobacco, and vast amounts of wheat, corn, peas, beans, flour, iron, hemp, lumber, and flax seed.¹⁹ During the next year John Williams, the inspector-general of the American customs service, visited the ports of Virginia. At Urbanna he made the following observations about the Rappahannock:

The collector and comptroller are men of great honor, and good abilities, and are very attentive to their duty, and exact in the business of the office. But it is here as it is in other rivers in the Chesapeake bay. The service is greatly exposed to the imposition of the smugglers not being sufficiently guarded against. And was there no other reason to be offered for proving the clandestine trade, which is carried on here, than that of the small amount of duties collected, I think it would sufficiently prove that the greater part of the dutiable goods consumed here are smuggled in.²⁰

With the eventual collapse of the American Board of Customs, it is doubtful that William's recommendations for preventive actions against smuggling in the Rappahannock were ever carried out. Nonetheless, the Wormeley family continued to hold the post of comptroller until 1776.²¹

Ralph V's political interests in the years after his return were not solely concerned with attempting to secure his comptroller's position. Almost immediately after his arrival he was recommended to be added to the Commission of Peace for Middlesex County. He was not officially appointed, however, until three years later.²² Following the family tradition he also participated in the affairs of Christ Church Parish. Wormeley was elected to the vestry on December 23, 1766, and by 1772 he was serving in the more active position of church warden when he advertised for the letting of a contract in Urbanna to build a new brick church.²³ While engaged in these duties, he and his London friends were working toward another prize. The rumor circulated in Virginia during June 1768 that he would be appointed deputy-secretary of the colony. Apparently Landon Carter wrote him an irate letter accusing him of being overly ambitious, and his young nephew admitted

that he had sought the post but had no hopes of "any such trump card in life."²⁴ Despite Wormeley's protestations, the letter is revealing about his early ambitions for high office. However, he was aware of the political conditions in England which had denied him the customs position, and since his friend Fox was abroad in France or Italy, he believed that he could not muster sufficient support to obtain the deputy's appointment. He said to Carter, "I am induced to believe old Col G--n applies to the ruin of everyplace and to the destruction of every young man's interest in Virginia."²⁵

Ralph Wormeley V's interest in a Virginia office was finally rewarded in 1771 with his appointment to the Governor's Council. The council, in the words of one historian, "represented the politically most powerful families of the colony, and were selected . . . because the executive could not function without their support."²⁶ Because of his wealth and family connections in the upper house, it was not surprising that Wormeley gained the office, but neither was it a foregone conclusion. Any number of Virginians scrambled for vacancies in the council, usually through the influence of their merchants at the colonial office.²⁷ A Wormeley, whose name had appeared three times among the councillors who served in the seventeenth century, had a certain advantage, but Ralph IV had been nominated several times and yet failed to be appointed.²⁸ Apparently more English influence was required, for in the eighteenth century, "whether it was an archbishop, an earl or the ear of Walpole," one had to use the right connections.²⁹ Ralph Wormeley V's fashionable

London circle provided that influence and brought back the old family tradition of membership on the council. As early as April 1770, even before there was a new council vacancy, Major-General MacKay was back in London and urging Lord Hillsborough, one of the secretaries of state, to give the young Virginian an appointment.³⁰ Wormeley also probably received the aid of influential friends in the colonial service, including Governor Robert Eden of Maryland and Governor William Tryon, who wrote him a congratulatory letter when he was appointed.³¹

Undoubtedly, by the late 1760s Ralph V was almost desperate for the high position of councillor, and his educational background, ambition, and family situation apparently being the impelling factors. It is significant, however, that he did not seriously consider elective office a possibility and probably for reasons of his personality. There is a family tradition that when Wormeley finally returned home from England, he was unable to conceal his accustomed urbanity. He even addressed the humble overseers at Rosegill with "grandiloquence" and his own cantankerous uncle Landon Carter constantly remarked on his conceit.³² Wormeley's temperament prevented him from seriously considering standing for election to the House of Burgesses and making even the perfunctory concessions to the electorate that were required for victory.³³

However, the inescapable element in Wormeley's desperation to reach a high level in the government was financial. The family was obviously worried about its continually declining fortune and

Ralph Wormeley IV's sales of lands in the 1750s and 1760s had not brought about permanent relief. Debts were piling up, both to merchants in England such as John Backhouse of Liverpool and Cary and Company of London and to other planters.³⁴ As early as 1766 two bills on Cary amounting to almost £400 were returned protested.³⁵ By October 1768 Ralph IV owed Richard Corbin at Laneville £132 5s. 3d., and Corbin wanted to take his tobacco crop to pay the debt.³⁶ The family lands in Middlesex County alone were still worked by 102 slaves in 1773, but production was slight due to land exhaustion and apparent neglect.³⁷ Landon Carter found on a visit that the tobacco was full of "suckers" and "worms." Although the corn was satisfactory he observed that it has "destroyed a noble pasture, on Purpose kept for many years to support the Cattle and the house in butter and milk."³⁸ In land and slaves the Wormeleys were still near the top of "the one hundred" wealthiest people in Virginia, but in reality they were filled with financial anxiety.³⁹ Ralph V was surely aware of the possibilities for financial reward that awaited him by leadership in government. The Virginia Council on one single day in 1749 granted themselves and their associates more than a million acres of land for speculative purposes.⁴⁰ The members of the upper house were men of an "acquisitive nature." As one historian has observed, "They relished their position, complained of overwork, and coveted more honors."⁴¹ From every standpoint Wormeley felt the council was right for him and was determined to become a member at an early age.

Wormeley's determination and Major-General MacKay's pressure

were nonetheless not immediately effective. Norborne Berkeley, Baron de Botetourt, who was then governor, opposed the appointment, since Rosegill was at the great distance of thirty-four miles from Williamsburg, which he regarded as "an insuperable objection to his being of the Council."⁴² The well-connected, intensely popular Botetourt had no reason to fear the power of the Wormeley family, but in an attempt to appease them he quickly suggested the nomination of Dudley Digges of York County, who was married to Ralph V's half sister Elizabeth.⁴³ Hillsborough agreed with the governor and indicated that if a vacancy should arise, Digges would be under first consideration.⁴⁴ However, after the death of Lord Botetourt in October of 1770, Wormeley's friends in London were victorious. The secretaries of state at Whitehall recommended Ralph Wormeley V as a councillor to fill the vacated seat of John Blair, and King George III in Council at St. James Palace approved the appointment on February 6, 1771.⁴⁵

When the appointment letter arrived, Wormeley "upon taking the Oath of the Government and the Oath of Office, was admitted to his place at the Board."⁴⁶ On the day on which he took his oath, September 25, 1771, the newly arrived governor, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, first met with the senior members of the council.⁴⁷ The upper house at the time of Wormeley's appointment consisted mostly of relatives: Philip Ludwell Lee, William Byrd III, Robert Carter, Robert Carter Burwell, John Tayloe II, George William Fairfax, Richard Corbin, Thomas Nelson, John Page, Sr., James Horrocks, clerk, and

William Nelson, president of the council and acting governor of Virginia. Soon after the appointment, William Nelson had noted in a letter to the London merchant Samuel Athawes that Ralph, Jr., "takes Pains, and I believe will be a good member."⁴⁸

Nelson's prediction of Wormeley's conscientious attention to his council duties was correct and Botetourt's fears about his distant residence were needless. At twenty-seven Wormeley was the youngest member of the body, but his attendance and participation were well above average. He attended 100 percent of the legislative meetings and sixty-five meetings or 82 percent of the eighty-five executive council sessions.⁴⁹ He was active in council committees as well. Immediately after his acceptance on the board he was appointed to serve on a committee, along with William Byrd and John Page, to draw up an address to the Burgesses.⁵⁰ This rather trivial but swift assignment was indicative of the responsibilities which the scholarly Wormeley had to assume in drafting speeches and studying legislative documents. Wormeley also served on committees to draw up addresses to the king, to consider a canal through Williamsburg, and to examine a plan for the opening of the falls of the James River.⁵¹

The responsibilities of a councillor seem impressive but historically unimportant compared with the duties of a burgess. Many historians believe that the power of the council had greatly declined since the mid-eighteenth century and that this was exemplified by its lack of legislative initiative. Although the council was not necessarily a rubber stamp, it accepted 73 percent

of the bills sent by the burgesses in the same form in which they were received, and the presentation of petitions in the upper house had greatly decreased by the 1770s.⁵² These circumstances do not so much prove that the council had become inactive, as they emphasize the upper house's preoccupation with its judicial and executive roles. Since 1745, it had accepted a lengthier session of twenty-four days for the General Court.⁵³ More important, however, the council had increasingly become a source of advice to the governor. Fauquier correctly observed that its power was "very great and extensive."⁵⁴

The last royal governor, Lord Dunmore, was particularly interested in his council and its composition, especially in 1772 when two vacancies arose. When James Horrocks died, Dunmore nominated several men including young John Page of Rosewell, but the seat was taken on August 4 by the Reverend John Camm, minister of Yorkhampton Parish.⁵⁵ Camm was one of the few so-called "placemen" in Virginia's upper house.⁵⁶ Dunmore again nominated candidates when the president, William Nelson, died a few months later. Despite the governor's later conduct, his choices for the board were not self-motivated. He refused to appoint newly arrived Englishmen who had "no connection with any of the families of this country or any influence among the people."⁵⁷ Like his predecessors, he preferred a man like Page who was from a great family and "esteemed."⁵⁸ John Page III was finally appointed to the council and joined his young cousin Ralph Wormeley V. Lord Dunmore would later see that he could not have placed together two men of more differing viewpoints.

Although the council and certain individuals in it had close alliances with the burgesses, other men including Ralph Wormeley increasingly gravitated toward the governor and helped widen the growing split between the crown and people of Virginia. Wormeley had a great admiration for Dunmore and his social position. The governor had a large library of 1,300 volumes and a fine collection of paintings and musical instruments. Although Dunmore was more a man of action than an intellectual, he was familiar with the London society which Wormeley esteemed so much.⁵⁹ The young councillor also developed a close friendship with Edward Foy, the governor's unpopular aide.⁶⁰ By 1774 Wormeley had so entrenched himself in the Dunmore regime that he was unable to avoid the increasingly heated issues of the disagreement between England and America.

It is important to discuss briefly certain aspects of Wormeley's personal life and thought. A most important event in his life occurred the year after he was appointed to the Virginia Council: his marriage to Eleanor Tayloe of Mount Airy. Although the Wormeleys of Rosegill and the Tayloes were already related, the marriage helped further seal the alliance of two wealthy families with representatives in the upper house. We know little about Eleanor, but she seems to have been a beauty of delicate sensitivity. After her marriage, the Reverend Isaac Giberne described an incident in which he nearly wrecked a phaeton carrying Eleanor and her sister Rebecca Lee. He reported that no accident happened other "than the loss of about three Tears from ye bright eyes of ye Councillor's

Lady."⁶¹

When Wormeley began to visit Eleanor Tayloe at Mount Airy, she was not yet sixteen but was probably already accomplished at the harpsichord. Undoubtedly her musical abilities played a great part in their courtship, as well as the attraction of the great house at Mount Airy, with its garden and marble statuary.⁶² Furthermore, Wormeley must have seemed a polished English gentleman and in Eleanor's presence he must have followed the practices which he later imparted to his son:

Never violate the laws of good manners and decorum, either in language or gesture under such a check, or in her company: When men or boys associate only with men or boys, they are very prone to lay aside, or neglect exterior good manners, and grow blunt, lone, and confident, instead of polite, mild and diffident, negligent too in dress and person.⁶³

By September of 1772 Wormeley's courtship was in its final stages and he brought his mother with him to Mount Airy.⁶⁴ His ardor had reached an almost fevered pitch by October when, despite his council duties, his mind was on his future bride. He wrote to his uncle at Sabine Hall:

Tomorrow I set of[f] for Williamsburg, you see how pleasant the prospect, what a hodge podge of ideas Cooke, Littleton . . . Venus & the graces. When my best judgement should be exercised upon the driest subjects, I am thinking of the lines of Catullus

Ah longe ante omnes, mihi quae
me carior ipso est
Lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce
mihi est

You will think me an enthusiast indeed and that I have forgotten I am writing to a man of three score . . . Let me hear from you when I am in Town and if you mention anything that I ought to hear of a certain Lady, the letter . . . will not be unwelcome.⁶⁵

Wormeley's use of the lines which Catallus wrote describing his intense love for his mistress emphasize the young Virginian's impatience at being away from his fiancée and his rather literary method of expressing it. Ralph Wormeley V finally married Eleanor Tayloe on November 19, 1772.⁶⁶ Through the union, then, he not only further cemented family and political ties, but gained an efficient helpmate for the conflicts ahead.

Wormeley had other interests as well during the early 1770s. He had developed at least a perfunctory concern with agriculture, necessitated by the farming problems at Rosegill.⁶⁷ He also had imbibed some of his father's love for horsebreeding and continually advertised the availability of his fine stallion "King Herod."⁶⁸ However, the scion of Rosegill's chief interest was in his books and scholarly endeavors.⁶⁹ After his arrival in Virginia, he had continued to amass his large library, which would eventually number more than two thousand volumes.⁷⁰ These books inspired Wormeley's zest for informal writing and discussion, although the formal opportunities for intellectual exchange in the neighborhood of Rosegill and the rest of the colony were limited indeed.⁷¹ Even the supposedly learned minister of Christ Church was described as "ignorant" and "spent most of his time in making or rather stealing sermons from old Magazines."⁷² Many of Wormeley's intellectual exchanges were with nearby "scholars," including his uncle Landon Carter. In a letter in March 1772, he thanked Carter for having lent him a book by William Warburton and remarked that "my only search

is truth."⁷³ Carter, as has been previously noted, thought Wormeley conceited and reported in his diary that during a visit, he endeavored "to shew him his rudeness and did at last convince him of his error and mistaken positiveness from his own books."⁷⁴ The opinion of the truly conceited and critical Landon Carter is unreliable, but the young councillor from Rosegill probably tended to flaunt his English education.⁷⁵ On one visit to Sabine Hall, Ralph V argued with Carter over botany and presented him with a written answer to his political essay that had been recently published in the Virginia Gazette.⁷⁶

Naturally, with the increasing dissatisfaction of the colonists, Wormeley was chiefly interested in political discussion and in developing his own philosophical support of the crown. Although he had disagreed throughout the 1760s with parliamentary taxation, Wormeley always hoped for the peaceful resolution of the difficulties between America and Britain. He expressed his views in a letter to his friend Edmund Jenings in London and received this reply: "I join heartily with you in all your good wishes for America. However, there is at present some Gleam of Hope that the differences between G. B. and the colonies will be settled to their mutual satisfaction."⁷⁷ In general his opinion of the conflict was similar to the stance of Robert Beverley, his wife's relative and a fellow alumnus of Trinity Hall. Beverley felt himself to be "the sorrowful spectator of these troubled times," and although he acknowledged the justice of many patriot grievances, he could not even conceive of joining a concerted resistance.⁷⁸ Wormeley also supported the moderate view of colonial

taxation and the Townshend duties as espoused by Daniel Dulany of Maryland, father of his school friend. Dulany's pamphlet, Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, had argued that taxation formed no part of the Parliament's supreme authority over the empire but that America's chief recourse was through increased home manufactures.⁷⁹ On the occasion of a visit by Dulany to Mount Airy, Landon Carter remarked on Wormeley's constant defense of the Marylander's views.⁸⁰

Wormeley, however, continued to grow apart philosophically from most prominent Virginians, even Beverley. His divergent views do not reflect an ignorance of the literature that the patriots were reading. His library contained many pamphlets that were important to the origins of the American Revolution, including Thomas Paine's Common Sense.⁸¹ He also had many of the same historical and philosophical works that predominated in the libraries of moderates and patriots like Landon Carter, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert Carter of Nomini Hall. Among such works were: William Robertson's History of the Reign of Emperor Charles V, Robertson's History of Scotland, David Hume's History of England, Locke's Essays, Hume's Essays, and, most important Thomas Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind.⁸² The latter volume was advertised as being temporarily lost by Wormeley in 1774, and it is important proof of his knowledge of the "Scottish Enlightenment."⁸³ Reid's concepts of self-evident truths were a major influence upon Thomas Jefferson.⁸⁴ Thus Ralph V was actually reading and studying many of the same writings as men who were

actively to support the rebellion against England.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the books of the more radical whigs, like Cato's Letters and Trenchard and Gordon's Tracts, were missing from Wormeley's library. Aspects of his training at Trinity Hall, his close English friendships, and his ambitions on the council reinforced his identification with the "court party."

As 1774 began, the last semblances of royal authority in Virginia began to erode. The news of the Boston Tea Party and the subsequent retaliation by Britain which closed Boston Port reached Virginia. Wormeley apparently agreed with the moderate Robert Beverley:

The Bostonians certainly acted imprudently and unjustly in the Destruction of the Tea, & the Ministry tyrannically & oppressively in the Measures they are pursuing -- I am apt to think the English Nation in General are heartily sick of the Dispute for it must produce Misery and Misfortune to both Parties.⁸⁶

Most burgesses, however, sympathized more with the Bostonians and appointed June 1, 1774, as a "Day of Fast and Prayer." Lord Dunmore dissolved the House and the representatives began another series of extra-legal sessions at the Raleigh Tavern. While eastern Virginia became more unstable, Dunmore enjoyed a brief triumph on the frontier. In 1774 he led a party of militia to put down the Indian uprising in the western country. The governor left Williamsburg on July 10, but two days later he stopped at Rosegill where he stayed for several more days. From the Wormeley plantation, he wrote a letter to Andrew Lewis directing him to raise all the men that he could and then to

build a fort at the mouth of the Great Kanawha.⁸⁷ The stay of the royal governor at Rosegill is indicative of his continually growing friendship with Ralph V. When Dunmore returned in triumph in December, young Wormeley was able to enjoy the governor's brief pinnacle of popularity.⁸⁸

However, the policies of Lord North had brought a profoundly disturbing effect on Virginia during 1774. Tea on board John Norton's ship at Yorktown was destroyed in November and the ship was not allowed to take on any tobacco for consignment. Virginia's radicals, especially Thomas Jefferson and Richard Henry Lee, hoped for a full boycott of English goods but knew that they could not enforce such a measure as long as British creditors could bring suit in the colony's courts. When the Fee Act of 1774 expired just before the sitting of the April court, the patriots had their opportunity to prevent its renewal and thus force the courts to close.⁸⁹ The General Court remained open throughout the summer but only with great difficulty, and all the county courts except for that of Middlesex stopped hearing civil cases.⁹⁰ Ralph Wormeley was apparently staunchly advocating keeping the Court open and wrote to Edmund Pendleton, asking him to reaffirm his earlier support of this position. Pendleton drew the following conclusion:

In my humble opinion therefore the Order of the General Court was right, and will stand the test of the strictest scrutiny, when Popular Clamour has subsided, I sincerely wish the County Courts had followed the example and not stopped their Proceedings, which if preserved in will fix an eternal stigma on the Countrey, introduce Anarchy and disorder and render life and property here precarious.⁹¹

After giving this opinion, Pendleton practically recanted and asked Ralph V not to show the letter to anyone. Wormeley did not appreciate Pendleton's position and penned a note at the bottom that "this paragraph plainly points out the games that this complacent casuist means to play."⁹²

While other Virginians who were deeply in debt were considering a separation from the imperial government, the Wormeleys, no less in difficulty, were looking for other solutions. Despite land exhaustion at Rosegill, their answer to the financial crisis was selling their most valuable western lands. Ralph Wormeley IV advertised in the Virginia Gazette that he desired to sell his entire holdings in Berkeley and Frederick Counties containing 12,076 acres and including five improved plantations, a merchant mill, tub mill, saw mill, two stone houses, and other appurtenances.⁹³ He also advertised in the Maryland Gazette and Pennsylvania Gazette where Landon Carter heard of the advertisement and remarked, "I say I was Surprized because there has been a prodigious boast of great Profits made there, and not long ago I heard A Gentleman declare his [estate] was then clear of debt."⁹⁴ Very little of the western land was sold, since two major tracts were given to Ralph IV's younger sons. The elder Wormeley still retained 3,712 acres in 1787.⁹⁵ More important, while other leading Virginia families were beginning to move to their lands in the Valley, the Wormeleys were still trying to maintain their Middlesex barony and hereditary power base in the tidewater.

Ralph Wormeley V was conscious of his family tradition and of

his position as a scholar, councillor, and husband of a woman from another family of wealth and power. These factors, along with his English friendships, produced a character that preferred "the Court" to "the Country." While many Virginians of the age identified with the Whigs, radical and otherwise, and were horrified by the monarch and his circle, Wormeley had opposite views.⁹⁶ Like a feudal knight he had sworn fealty to his king and governor, and by the end of 1774 he had probably formulated his next goal: to become "President of His Majesty's Council."⁹⁷ From that high rank, at a relatively young age, who could know what other heights he might reach in Anglo-American society? He failed to assess the strength of the orations at the Raleigh Tavern, the mobs on Duke of Gloucester Street and in Yorktown harbor, and the growing murmurs of revolution all around him.

CHAPTER III

A MOST INIMICAL TORY

It is my unalterable intention, lest the event of things turn out ever so averse from my hopes to approve myself an enemy to every species of rebellion.

Ralph Wormeley to Lord Dunmore
June 22, 1775¹

By 1775 the murmurs of revolution in Virginia grew in volume and were finally summarized in Patrick Henry's famous "Give me liberty or give me death" oration. The loyalist reaction was expressed by James Parker in Norfolk who indignantly said, "You never heard anything more infamously insolent than P. Henry's speech he called the K--- a Tyrant, a fool, a puppet & a tool to the ministry . . . he could not have been more compleatly scurrilous if he had been possessed of John Wilkes' Vocabulary."²

The comparison of Henry to the radical Wilkes would not have been lost on Ralph Wormeley V. His personal opposition to American resistance, although still moderate, was changing, and he was soon to have his opportunity to express his view publicly. On the night of April 21, 1775, a group of soldiers from the H. M. S. Magdalen, anchored in the York River, seized the powder in the public magazine in Williamsburg. The news spread like wildfire throughout tidewater and volunteer companies threatened to march on the capital in open

rebellion.

Wormeley was in Williamsburg during the events of April attending meetings of the council. An uneasy calm briefly fell over the crowded capital but then the Virginia Gazette further raised the public fury by publishing excerpts of the December report of Governor Dunmore to Lord Dartmouth describing Virginia resistance as completely illegal. Dunmore realized that this new development mandated some sort of public statement about his actions, although his name was already ruined in Virginia.³ He called an advisory meeting of his council for May 2, at the Palace.

When Ralph Wormeley arrived at the Governor's Palace he found the open evidences of the breakdown of royal authority. The grand, peaceful house had become an embattled fortress with swivel guns at the windows, cut loop holes in the walls, and guards equipped with weapons from Dunmore's large arsenal.⁴ Once inside he summoned within himself a new determination to smash these threats to the government of George III. A number of councillors including John Tayloe and Robert Carter were conspicuously absent at the meeting. The diminished group included Wormeley, William Byrd III, Richard Corbin, Thomas Nelson, John Page, John Camm, and the recently appointed Gawin Corbin.⁵

The councillors listened to Dunmore's explanation of why he took the gunpowder, a step that he said was "induced by an unaffected regard for the general welfare of the people . . . as well actuated by duty and zeal in the service of his majesty."⁶ John

Page, the most outspoken patriot on the board, immediately responded by rebuking the governor and requesting a return of the powder.⁷

Page recalled that Dunmore then "flew into an outrageous passion smiting his fist upon the table, saying, 'Mister Page, I am astonished at you.'"⁸ The governor summoned his composure and then left the group alone to deliberate until the next day.⁹

The deliberations of the council included drafting a proclamation for the governor to present to the people of Virginia.

John Daly Burk, the early nineteenth-century historian, recorded that Ralph Wormeley V, the council's most prolific writer of legislation and amendments, was chosen to compose the document. Burk described the resulting proclamation as:

calculated rather to enflame than soothe the present discontents: but a majority of the board although directly opposed to the claims of the people declared themselves in favor of a milder and more conciliatory language--and the harsh parts were therefore softened, and the whole was made to breathe a more gentle and benignant spirit.¹⁰

Although the proclamation was tempered, Dunmore still read it with pleasure, especially his explanation for seizing the powder:

I think it proper to declare that the apprehensions which seemed to prevail throughout the whole country of an intended insurrection of the slaves . . . and its [the Magazine] being an insecure depository, were my inducements to that measure . . . Acting under these motives, I certainly rather deserve the thanks of the country than their reproaches.¹¹

Burk in his history added that Wormeley requested all present to subscribe their names "with the view as he alleged of seeing his name handed down to posterity, as the strenuous opposer of a licentious multitude, in support of good order and government."¹² Most except for Page probably did affix their signatures but they were deleted in the printed version of the document.¹³ Ralph Wormeley V and John Page left the Palace with a new commitment to their respective beliefs and completely separated by a new enmity.

Although he was a zealous monarchist, Wormeley's conduct at the meeting cannot be simplistically assessed as oppressive or reactionary. His opposition to the excesses of the multitude was shared with most of the moderates in Virginia. In his own way he had struck a blow of conscience; he had reacted to the prospects of disorder in a manner consistent with his family position and learning in England. Nevertheless Ralph Wormeley V had publicly associated himself with the most oppressive action of Virginia's royal regime. He would never be able to disavow it.

The proclamation, of course, had no effect and subsequent events brought down the government of Lord Dunmore. The council made a final effort to soothe the people by publishing a letter pleading with them not to think of the upper house as "having a distinct interest from the rest of their countrymen." It urged them to refrain from the intemperate behavior, which must tend to exasperate and inflame rather than to reconcile the differences that now unhappily subsist."¹⁴ The letter helped the council only margin-

ally and did nothing for the hated Dunmore. He, along with his family, Captain Foy, and several servants slipped out of the Palace in the early morning hours of June 8 and boarded the H. M. S. Fowey in the York River.

The members of the council present in May remained in Williamsburg in June and attempted to conduct the government under the direction of the president, Thomas Nelson. Diatribes against individuals in the upper house began even before Dunmore's departure. Most of these appeared in Pinckney's Virginia Gazette. "Voluntarious" denounced the "immoral character" of William Byrd III and those over whom he "presides," including Richard Corbin, Ralph Wormeley V, and John Randolph. The writer suggested they leave Virginia and go to New York.¹⁵ By June 8 one writer suggested that England would be a better destination for Ralph Wormeley, since "he will most probably meet with a most gracious reception, and be eminently rewarded for his loyalty and zeal, in promoting the designs of Parliament of reducing America to a state of the most abject slavery."¹⁶

The verbal abuse of accused loyalists in the Gazette was followed by actual rebellion in Virginia by the summer of 1775. The so-called "shirtmen" in Williamsburg struck fear in the hearts of the remaining loyalists, who seemed fewer in number with each passing day.¹⁷ As more leaders of Virginia began to identify with the revolutionary cause and prepared for the meeting of the convention in July, Wormeley found himself increasingly alone. Thomas Nelson, as Dunmore predicted, proved himself indisposed to help the cause of royal

government.¹⁸ The young councillor realizing his helplessness and perhaps the wisdom of leaving the steaming capital, decided to resign from the upper house. Ralph V wrote to Dunmore on June 22 that his opposition to the power of the legislature had drawn upon him the "popular odium." He remarked:

The late measures adopted by that branch of the legislature of which I am a member and their acting in concert with the lower house, have determined me to leave Williamsburg, I hope and trust your Lordship will vindicate me to my King and his servants who are in confidence and have the superintendence of the affairs of this Country, if the day should ever arrive when the Conduct of his Majesty's Council will be scanned.¹⁹

Despite the expediency of Ralph's decision to resign, it was not altogether an easy solution to his plight. His council seat had still given him some security, for while he had a position that could be obtained by inheritance and influence, he was best able to protect himself.²⁰

As Ralph V journeyed to Rosegill, Dunmore received his letter and immediately composed an explanation to the secretary of state in London. The governor assured the minister that Wormeley had refused to aid the rebellious measures of the patriots in any manner and said that his resignation "was the only way by which with any degree of safety he could show his disapprobation of their proceedings."²¹

The scion of Rosegill did feel much safer at home in Middlesex County, an area known for its "toryism."²² Urbanna's Scottish merchant community ardently supported the crown and were much in

sympathy with their fellow countrymen at Norfolk, who attempted to resist the nonimportation and nonexportation agreements and who even sheltered Lord Dunmore for a time.²³ Other parts of Virginia such as Accomac and Nansemond Counties were resisting the actions of the patriots also but had little eventual success.²⁴ The independent companies and "shirtmen" began to spread out over the countryside and many individuals became less vocal.

Apparently Wormeley himself was relatively quiet for the rest of 1775. He was still receiving letters from old friends like Edward Foy who described to him the fighting at Bunker Hill, indicating that colonial resistance was weak.²⁵ Wormeley received a most revealing letter from William Byrd III, whose wife had spent part of the previous summer at Rosegill. Byrd outlined his fears of the coming war and assessed the implications of their positions as former councillors, saying: "It is difficult for any set of Men to give up Power. The Congress has at present assumed Regal Powers, & they, as well as their subalterns receive handsome Pay."²⁶ Although the master of Westover feared reprisals from the "Valiant Volunteers," as former commander of the militia he was not afraid to "have an opportunity to try their Courage."²⁷ The hopes of these ousted councillors for the return of the old government were diminished with the final events of the year. Ralph V did not follow Byrd's desertion of the royal cause in November when Dunmore attempted to free the slaves in exchange for their military service.²⁸ Although the family at Rosegill was frightened over the prospect of a slave

rebellion on their plantation, as well as by the burning of Norfolk in December, they clung stubbornly to their tory views.

The convictions of Ralph Wormeley V were finally tested in April of 1776. While engaged in committing acts of plunder and general depredation along the Virginia coast, Dunmore sent messages to several prominent loyalists to join him on board the H. M. S. Fowey. Ralph's old Eton classmate, John Randolph Grymes of Brandon, did so. Dunmore was elated, writing to Lord George Germain that Grymes was "a great acquisition": a man of family and wealth, amiable character, and bravery.²⁹ Unfortunately, although Wormeley declined to come to the ship, he wrote a letter to Grymes on April 4, explaining his refusal. In answer to his old friend as to why he stayed at home to face "the indiscriminating ravages of War," he replied:

As to the advice of the Minister which may lead his Lordship to conclude it to be the duty of every man, now, . . . to repair to his Lordship without probability of advancing any practical scheme of utility, of concerting any effectual plan of operations, and without any regard to circumstances, I say Sir, such advices are repugnant to the words and meaning of the King, in the true knowledge of our present situation, his Majesty thus expresses himself and although many of these unhappy people may still retain their loyalty and may be too wise not to see the fatal consequences of the usurpation, and wish to resist yet the torrent of violence has been strong enough to compel their acquiescence till a sufficient force shall appear to support them.³⁰

In addition to this explanation, Wormeley replied that if demanded and given provision he would come, but that as an "inferior member" of his family he was unable to obtain supplies. He also said that he was disturbed by an "inverterate disorder."³¹

Ralph V's refusal to join Dunmore illustrates several important considerations. First, Ralph Wormeley V was a scholar, not a soldier. His strong philosophical loyalism was revealed openly in letters and discussion, but it was not backed up by a desire to act. This is not at all to say that he was a coward. He was, however, unable to translate his thoughts into actions, especially with the force of patriot strength closing in about him. The loyalist regiments had been routed several months earlier at Great Bridge and for all practical purposes the tory movement in Virginia was crushed.³²

Wormeley's refusal to join Lord Dunmore reflected then, an accurate assessment of forces around him, but derived from another consideration as well. His zealous friendship with the royal governor was probably over. Wormeley's friend Foy had written him from New York:

Lord Dunmore is not a character from which, in any difficult times, I should hope for any great advantage to my own from acting under him . . . I have found by five years experience that it is not an attachment to his interest, and zeal in doing his business, that can recommend a man to his Generosity or even engage him to be Just.³³

Ralph V must have agreed with this assessment and probably realized that it was Dunmore's actions that had left him stranded. The governor may not have totally caused the death of loyalism in Virginia, but neither did he give it any lasting assistance. He lacked a superior military force and failed properly to encourage a strong tory leadership or other loyalist support.³⁴ Dunmore's depredations along the coast and his slave proclamation only served to

erode the power that men like Wormeley had worked to build. The former councillor must have also realized that escape to the Fowey was not an advantageous solution. Many loyalist families like the Spruills of Norfolk had taken shelter aboard Dunmore's fleet and had found themselves ruined and neglected.³⁵ Ralph Wormeley V retained a genuine allegiance to the king, however, there is no real evidence that in the spring of 1775 he had any secret plans to take overt action.

Nevertheless, when Wormeley's letter to John Grymes was intercepted and turned over to the new Virginia government, he was in great danger. Ralph V was forced to appear before a Committee of Safety meeting on April 22, 1776, at which his former colleague on the council and ideological enemy, John Page, presided. The committee admitted that they found nothing in the letter that fell within the defined limits of toryism, but nevertheless concluded that the letter was a "full proof of the inimical disposition of the said Ralph Wormeley, Junr. Esq. against the rights of America and showing a readiness to join the enemies of this colony provided he should be called." The members then ordered that he be discharged out of custody upon posting a bond of £10,000.³⁶ Wormeley, continually asserting innocence, refused to give the required bond and remained in custody.³⁷ He finally petitioned the convention on May 13, asking that he be released since he had "never opposed the public measures, violated the association, or transgressed the ordinances of this hono^{b1} house."³⁸ (See Appendix II).

Apparently, however, the petition only served to anger the

members of the Virginia Convention at their May 15 meeting. It "caused them to assign narrow and specific limits to his abode and to renew the bond and security for the same amount."³⁹ The convention, feeling that Ralph V was "dangerous" to the country, added:

Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee that the said Ralph Wormeley . . . ought to be confined in the County of Berkley, and that part of his father's Estate which lies in the County of Frederick, that he be allowed Twenty days from this time to remove himself to the said place, and that he give bond and security in the sum of Ten Thousand pounds not to depart without these limits untill he shall be permitted so to do, on his sincere contrition and future good behavior.⁴⁰

The convention added the penalty of sending a subaltern officer with him at his own expense and said that it had agreed to the resolution because "the said Wormeley hath asked pardon of them and shewn great contrition for his unworthy conduct."⁴¹ Page and others familiar to Wormeley seem to have considered his petition arrogant and insulting to their authority, so they even increased his punishment. Although the former councillor wrote yet another letter reasserting that he had asked no pardon since he was innocent, the decision of Virginia's new rulers remained unaltered.⁴²

The sentence of Ralph V to exile was not unusual in Virginia in 1776, although the back of loyalism had been effectively broken. Most prominent and overt tories had left the colony. Attorney General John Randolph and his family had sailed to England in September and taken up residence among other tories in Brompton Row, Knightsbridge, in London, Randolph was the leader of the Virginia

loyalists, entertaining at innumerable American dinner parties and optimistically beginning to formulate plans for his role in the reinstituted English government in the colonies.⁴³ Ralph V's own brother James, a graduate of the College of William and Mary and a former clerk in the office of the secretary of the colony, was among this circle. Unlike the elder sibling, he had sailed for England with the Randolphs, married their daughter Ariana, and ultimately returned to America as an ensign in the ninth regiment of foot under John Burgoyne.⁴⁴ Ralph V's youngest brother John was in England for his education at the time of the revolution and later served in a tory regiment in North Carolina.⁴⁵

There was a large group of Virginia refugees, especially from the ranks of the Scottish merchants, but pockets of loyalism still remained at home. By the spring of 1776 the Virginia Convention and Committees of Safety were frightened about depredations along the coast and actually considered wholesale evacuations of tories away from tidewater. They had become very apprehensive about the expression of "inimical opinions" and began to suppress these voices of dissent.⁴⁶ The patriots believed that certain prominent tidewater loyalists might exercise influence over the lower classes, especially the fishermen, and dealt with them accordingly.⁴⁷

Eventually, Virginia tories began to be sentenced to various punishments. Jacob Ellegood and James Parker of Norfolk found themselves imprisoned and some of their property confiscated, although they were treated less harshly than John Goodrich, who had engaged in

guerilla action under Dunmore.⁴⁸ A favorite punishment for loyalists of the upper class was exile to the inland areas of the state. John Tayloe Corbin, who had expressed loyalty during the previous October, was sentenced to such exile in Caroline County, while Robert Shedden was similarly paroled to Dinwiddie County.⁴⁹ Wormeley's merchant friend Charles Neilson of Urbanna unsuccessfully attempted to reach the Fowey and was banished to Fauquier County. Neilson fared the worst of all the exiles. He lost all his property and died in 1781, leaving his wife and three children utterly destitute.⁵⁰

Thus Ralph Wormeley V, the peaceful scholar, had missed his chance to go to England and, like others who stayed, had to face the penalties imposed by the Virginia patriots. Wormeley's sentence was more symbolic than punitive, but then forced exile was exceedingly difficult for a man bred in a family of the first rank, who had expected to obtain the highest offices in government.⁵¹ Page and the other representatives knew their prisoner and saw confinement in the west as a simple means of eliminating him as a threat to their leadership. Landon Carter, who was more rabid, felt that their penalty was too lenient. He erroneously believed that Wormeley really intended to go to Dunmore and, after reading about the actual verdict in the Gazette lamented, "It must look as if they intended to drive him away (to Dunmore)."⁵²

Wormeley met his sentence with resignation and began to try to put his finances in order. He was forced to offer his beloved thoroughbred, King Herod, for sale to Edmund Wilcox, but circumstances

prevented them from concluding a bargain. Without bitterness he wrote that perhaps they could agree on a price "whenever there shall be an accomodation or final Settlement of the unhappy Contest--from every impulse of humanity, every self-interested motive & from a comprehensive regard to the interest of his Country & the Continent of America no man more fervently prays for an end to it."⁵³

In order to meet the deadline prescribed by the convention, Wormeley left Middlesex on Saturday, May 26. His almanac diary chronicles his journey and the early part of his sojourn at his father's plantation, "The Rocks," in Berkeley County.⁵⁴ As he left Rosegill, he must have felt acute sadness. Although the slaves were planting tobacco in the fields as their predecessors had done for 125 years, the fifth Ralph must have known that life there would never be the same again.

The "company" traveling to the western country included the officer assigned to escort Ralph V and his most trusted slaves, Daniel and Billy Mason. Probably his wife Eleanor and infant daughter remained behind. The party reached Fredericksburg within four days and arrived in Berkeley on Saturday, June 2.⁵⁵ The house they occupied there was large and comfortable by Valley standards, and there were some responsibilities in managing the estate to keep him occupied.⁵⁶ Wormeley spent much of the next few weeks at The Rocks supervising the farming. The restrictions on his movements were not as rigorous as one might suppose, although he later recalled that whenever he approached the edge of the county he "was admonished thus far shalt thou go and,

no farther."⁵⁷ Nevertheless he went to the springs on July 25 and stayed until September 5. He periodically went shopping in Winchester and probably did some entertaining since he constantly paid a Mrs. Browne for washing fine table cloths and napkins.⁵⁸ Ralph V was able to send his slave Billy Mason to Rosegill with the wagon, and was therefore able to receive supplies and keep in touch with his family.⁵⁹ It is probable that Eleanor traveled to Berkeley in the fall of 1776, since she became pregnant with their second child, Ralph, who was born on June 16, 1777.⁶⁰

The exile to The Rocks did not change Wormeley's loyalist sympathies. He continued to order books and pamphlets dealing with American independence, and kept up with the movements of British warships through information in the Maryland Gazette. He was also aware of fellow loyalists in Berkeley and he listed them in his diary with the label "amici."⁶¹ Nevertheless, there is no evidence that he had any overt dealings with them. He was still a theoretical tory, condemning the treatment of himself and others in the following terms: "Nothing is wanting but to punish men, especially tories, for the nefarious crime of thinking--the sentiments of the minds should be collected from the silence of the tongue--then just punishments will follow whether one speaks or not."⁶²

Wormeley was not free from further actions by the patriots while he was in exile. On December 14 he noted that at night his house was surrounded by a party of men.⁶³ He finally wrote a letter of protest to the Virginia Council of State, saying that he had been "disturbed

by sundry Persons in going to His House or Place of Residence within the Aforesaid Limits in a riotous and tumultuous manner where he hath been much alarmed and his Life endangered."⁶⁴ The council did not ignore the exile's request for relief and ordered that the County Lieutenant of Berkeley suppress such riotous meetings.⁶⁵ Ralph V remained in confinement in the Valley until 1778 when, as a result of a letter to his wife's brother-in-law Mann Page, the assembly ordered his release.⁶⁶ Although he desired a pardon as outlined in the congressional resolution of April 23, he still pointed out, "I come not under the description: I have neither levied war, nor adhered to, aided or abetted the enemy. I want no act of grace, I only ask for those of Justice."⁶⁷ Thanks to Mann Page's influence, Wormeley was able to return to Rosegill. He probably spent the years until 1781 absorbed in books, family, and agriculture.

Before the end of the Revolution the Wormeleys once more felt the full effects of the conflict. The government was distracted as the war neared its end and the whole tidewater became a prey to raiders and pirates, usually Americans, who flew the Union Jack as a cover for indiscriminate robbery.⁶⁸ On June 4 and 5 of 1781 Rosegill was attacked by such a "tory privateer" ship owned by Frederick Rhineland of New York. The estate was plundered of plate, watches, wearing apparel, and other valuable objects, and of "thirty-six as fine and valuable servants, tradesmen, and labourers as were in the County."⁶⁹ The privateersmen, under the command of Captain Ross, were unsuccessfully attacked by a small force raised by Hugh Walker

in Urbanna, and the crew used this as an excuse to indulge themselves "in every excess of riot and plunder" at the plantations of the Robinsons and Grymeses.⁷⁰ Wormeley, Philip Ludwell Grymes, Simon Frazier, Hugh Walker and others slipped into Portsmouth under a flag of truce to wait for the ship. When they found it already had sailed to New York, they persuaded General Leslie to have the goods intercepted.⁷¹ The Wormeley family had lost property valued at £4,000 and Ralph V felt compelled to take the risks of slipping behind enemy lines.⁷² Nevertheless, the patriots were closely watching his moves. Major B. Edgar Joel wrote about the situation to Brigadier General George Weedon on June 21, and railed against the conduct of those "traitors attempting to recover their property." He urged the general that "an enquiry be made into the affair."⁷³

British forces under orders of Leslie intercepted much of the stolen property and some of it arrived in September in a ship under a flag of truce.⁷⁴ The ship docked at Urbanna Creek, but due to a smallpox epidemic among the slaves it was not allowed to land. The Middlesex residents, including the Wormeleys, petitioned Governor Nelson asking that they be allowed to at least send the slaves a doctor and "for the sake of humanity supply them with such necessaries and comforts as their melancholy condition absolutely requires."⁷⁵

Nelson replied to the petition with an order that the Negroes be landed, "upon the Condition that they be delivered up when demanded," but adding that "the other articles are to be detained with the Flag until Further orders."⁷⁶ For a time there was a change of mind by the

the tie between Britain and America.⁸¹ Wormeley the scholar was still a confirmed loyalist and as late as 1786 wrote to Wakelin and Welch, his factors in London:

Mr. Donald who is at Richmond can give you a better history of the doings of our legislators than I can, I am afraid to write him on the subject least the freedom of my remarks should be too bold, and if they were to see the light . . . I might be committed to darkness so true is what Mr. Hume says that a freedom of writing can never prevail in a republic to that degree it does in a limited monarchy.⁸²

The words are not those of a patriot eager to form a strong new nation, they are the language of a tory.

Wormeley's distinctive "court" ideology had been the only constant in his life during seven years of revolution in Virginia. On that long road one hundred and fifty years of baronial power had ended along with Ralph Wormeley V's ambitions for leadership under the crown. The family fortunes lay in ruin. The news of the Treaty of Paris probably reached Rosegill by late February but the occupants had little interest. They were preoccupied with attempting to salvage and rebuild their previous life.

EPILOGUE

The only event that can save America from the desolating principles of the reigning Condorcet and his Sect is a schism; if this do not take place our country is gone, and will be devoted to a revolutionary system, just as it is ended in Europe, after an Experiment of Ten years, which has evinced to all men of observation the misery and ruin that this wicked destroying system has brought on every region, which unhappily has been under its accursed influence.

Ralph Wormeley to John Rutledge, Jr.,
February 25, 1802¹

Ralph Wormeley V and his family were not completely destroyed by the American Revolution but they never really regained their former position. For at least five years after the war, most of their time was spent trying to recoup their losses and political activity was virtually absent from their lives. In 1783 they were in such difficulty that Ralph V had no money to pay an impending debt of thirty-four pounds and feared that the sheriff would confiscate his property.²

Ralph's brothers were in desperate circumstances in England immediately after the war, but by the middle of the decade, they were both allowed to return to Virginia and were installed on the family's western lands.³ Ralph V had other headaches as chief administrator of the Mount Airy estate after his father-in-law's death, and as a member of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and

Mary during its financially unstable period in the late eighteenth century.⁴

Wormeley was still bitter about his exile and hated the disorganized Confederation government with its "infamous and wicked demagogues."⁵ Nevertheless, his attitudes changed as his financial situation improved somewhat in 1786 and 1787. When he perceived the competence of the Constitutional Convention, he excitedly remarked: "As it has in its composition men of abilities, experience, and integrity, whom opinion and confidence follow we may expect some reform."⁶ After the drafting of the Constitution, Virginia leaders began to recognize Wormeley's potential value. He was encouraged to stand for election to the ratification convention and Henry Lee noted with delight to James Madison that he was one of the "zealous abettors of the Constitution."⁷ The former councillor was in fact elected, and his influence and hard work aided the passage of the document.⁸

Consequently the scion of Rosegill did finally reappear in Virginia's political life. He served at several state conventions and in the House of Delegates in 1788, 1789, and 1790. These offices were, however, really insignificant compared to his former positions and those to which he had aspired. At his last attempt to gain a seat in the House of Delegates in 1791, he was finally defeated by the more democratic candidate, Overton Cosby.

At first he did not give up on efforts at restoration of the Wormeley position. He tried to obtain several important federal

posts but without success.⁹ In 1796 he attempted to be chosen as a Federalist elector advertising:

My principles of politics have been in favor of the wise plan of neutrality, adopted and pursued by our government: I am therefore, attached to those men in high official functions, who have kept our country, during a most trying and perilous crisis, in a state of peace, thereby advancing its prosperity to the utmost degree of which it is, at present susceptible; who have made the Constitution of the United States the rule of their actions, and have invigorated it, with such respectability, as to acquire to it the confidence of the European world.¹⁰

Wormeley also completed ambitious additions to Rosegill house giving it extraordinary proportions and elegant furnishings in the new classical style.¹¹ No less important were his admirable attempts to give his children distinctive educations. He took his son John to Brown University in 1799 and a daughter to a private academy in Pennsylvania.¹²

Tragedy after tragedy, however, fell over the family at Rosegill. Not only was Ralph V continually defeated in politics, he began to be continually defeated by life itself. The death of his parents in the early 1790s was only the beginning. His favorite son John died in a fit of acute madness in 1799.¹³ His eldest son Ralph VI, always considered somewhat dull, failed to finish his education at the College of William and Mary and became a profligate. With exasperation his father remarked, "My eldest son is very nearly everything I wish him not to be--he wants understanding--is difficult in manners--is idle, expensive, and addicted to low company."¹⁴

With each defeat, Wormeley grew more and more pessimistic.

Jefferson and the Republicans sickened him and their policies caused him to again fear an uncontrolled revolution.¹⁵ He even questioned his earliest assumptions: residence in Virginia and plantation life. He wrote to his youngest son Warner Lewis Wormeley, who was studying under a merchant in London:

I send you to London to try to make you a man of mercantile business, that you may be enabled to live by your own exertions independent of lands and negroes, foreseeing, that this latter property is becoming less valuable by becoming daily more precarious, all produce is quite low, and my income consequently much reduced. I would wish you do everything well, and therefore wish to keep you out of Virginia; if you come here you are ruined for ever.¹⁶

Except for his old enemy John Page, Ralph Wormeley V survived as the last of the old councillors and outlived most of the elite of the former regime.

Ralph V's painful death on a bleak January day in 1806 ended a chapter of Virginia history forever. He was a man who felt truly deprived of his destiny. Born into the highest elite the American colonies could produce, educated in fashionable English circles, and appointed to important government office at an early age, his life should have had a different outcome. The course of his career after 1775 helps prove that there really was a revolution in Virginia. If an old order is truly overthrown in a rebellion then certain families of assured position must yield to persons of a different place on the social scale. It was the case in Virginia that Wormeleys, Corbins, Grymes, and other families of traditional power and a "court" ideology were displaced by Washingtons, Jeffersons, and other persons who were

slightly lower in rank. As the years have passed this demise of Ralph Wormeley V and other loyalists has become complete and their dissent from the accepted principles of the American Revolution has been forgotten.

It is impossible for us to understand completely or appreciate the views of Ralph Wormeley V, yet his consistency of character in an age of change can be admired. We have no idea what contributions he might have made if conditions had been different. A member of the same generation, Thomas Jefferson, was able to boast on his tombstone that he had written the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and had founded the University of Virginia. Wormeley, whose downfall nearly coincided with Jefferson's great rise to prominence, was unable to list any such accomplishments for placement on his monument. Nevertheless, after his death his family had an incisive epitaph carved on his tomb: "The rules of honour guided the actions of this great man. He was a perfect gentleman and finished scholar, with many virtues founded on Christianity."

APPENDIX I
THE WORMELEY OF
VIRGINIA 1636 - 1815

Christopher (? - 1698)

Christopher Wormeley
(- 1644)
Governor of Tortuga (1632 - 35)
later of WORMELEY CREEK, York Co.
m. Mary (? - 1647)
who afterwards m. William Brocas

Ralph Wormeley I
(1620? - 1651)
WORMELEY CREEK, York Co.
ROSEGILL, Lancaster Co.*
m. Agatha Eltonhead Stubbins
who afterwards (c. 1620 - 1697)
m. Sir Henry Chicheley
(1615 - 1683)

Elizabeth (? - c. 1680)
m. 1) Richard Kemp
(? - 1656)

Acting Governor 1644 - 1645
RICHNECK, James City Co.
2) Sir Thomas Lunsford
(1610 - 1653)

PORTORAGO, Lancaster Co. **
3) Major General Robert Smith
(? - 1687)
BRANDON, Middlesex Co.

William (1647 - 1654)

Ralph II (1650 - 1701)
ROSEGILL, Middlesex Co.
PANUNKEY NECK, King William Co.
WORMELEY CREEK, York Co.
NANZANTICO, Richmond Co. ***
m. 1) Lady Katherine Lunsford Jennings
(1657 - 1685)

2) Elizabeth Armistead
PORTORAGO, Rappahannock Co. **
(c. 1669 - 1716)
HESSE, Gloucester Co.+
who afterwards m.
William Churchill
BUSHY PARK, Middlesex Co.

Elizabeth (? - 1740)
m. John Lomax (1674 - 1729)
PORT TOBACCO, Caroline Co.

Katherine (1680 - 1703)
m. Gavin Corbin (1669 - 1744)
BUCKINGHAM, Middlesex Co.

Judith (1694 - 1716)
m. Mann Page (1691 - 1730)
ROSEWELL, Gloucester Co.

Ralph III (c. 1689 - 1713)
ROSEGILL, Middlesex Co.
NANZANTICO, Richmond Co. ***

John Wormeley (1689 - 1727)
ROSEGILL, Middlesex Co.
WORMELEY CREEK, York Co.
PANUNKEY NECK, King William Co.
m. Elizabeth Ring
(1693 - 1761)
KINGFIELD, York Co.
KINGS QUARTER, King and Queen Co.

* Now Middlesex County
** Now Caroline County
*** Now King George County
+ Now Mathews County

Elizabeth (1715 - 1740)
 m. Colonel Landon Carter (1710 - 1778)
 SABINE HALL, Richmond Co.

Sarah (1714 - 1715)
 Judith (1714 - 1751)
 m. George Lee (1714 - 1762)
 MT. PLEASANT, Westmoreland Co.

Ralph IV (1715 - 1790)
 ROSECILL, Middlesex Co.
 LANDSHOWNZ, Urbanna
 WORMELEY COTTAGE, Urbanna
 MANSKIN LODGE, King William Co.
 WORMELEY CREEK, York Co.

m. 1) Sarah Berkeley (1714 - 1741)
 BARN ELMS, Middlesex Co.
 2) Jane Bowles (1726 - 1793)
 SUTTERLEY, St. Mary's Co.

Sarah (1718 - 1772)
 m. Christopher Robinson (1705 - 1768)
 HEWICK, Middlesex Co.

Mary (1719 - 1721)
 Agatha (1720)
 Agatha (1721 - ?)
 m. Beverly Randolph, Gloucester Co.

John (1724 - 1785)
 m. 1) Anne Tayloe, Lancaster Co. (?)
 2) Frances Bond (?)

Mary (1726 - 1727)

Elizabeth (1737 - 178?)
 m. Dudley Digges (c. 1718 - 1790)
 DIGGES HOUSE, Yorktown

Ralph V (1744 - 1806)
 ROSECILL, Middlesex Co.
 MANSKIN LODGE, King William Co.
 m. Eleanor Tayloe (1756 - 1815)
 MOUNT AIN, Richmond Co.
 TAYLOE HOUSE, Williamsburg

James (1747 - 1830)
 THE ROCKS, Frederick Co.
 TOULSTON, Yorkshire, England
 m. Ariana Randolph (? - 1794)
 TAZEWELL HALL, Williamsburg

John (1747 - 1749)
 John (1761 - 1808)
 COOL SPRING, Berkeley Co.
 m. Mary ?

Judith (? - 1816)
 m. Philip Ludwell Grymes (1746 - 1805)
 BRANDON, Middlesex Co.

Lucy (? - 1773)
 Mary (? - c. 1787)
 m. Nathaniel Burwell (?)

Jane (1776 - 1814)
 m. Carter Beverly (1774 - 1844)
 ELKWOOD, Culpeper Co.

Ralph VI (1777 - 1810)
 ROSECILL, Middlesex Co.
 PROSPECT HILL, Middlesex Co.
 m. Elizabeth Boswell (1785 - 1816)
 OAKLEY HILL, Gloucester

John (1780 - 1801)
 Warner Lewis (1785 - 1817)
 MANSKIN LODGE, King William Co.
 m. Maria Carter Hall (?)
 Fredericksburg

Rebecca Tayloe (1787 - ?)
 m. Thomas L. Grymes (?)

Judith (1787 - 1793)
 Sarah Tayloe (1794 - 1875)
 m. 1) Dr. George D. Nicol (1787 - 1823)
 DEER CHASE, Middle: William K. Perrin (1784 - 1855)
 2) COSHEN, Gloucester

APPENDIX II

RALPH WORMELEY V'S PETITION TO THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION, MAY 13, 1776*

To the hono^{ble} the president & the house of delegates

The petition of Ralph Wormley Jun. humbly praying sheweth

That your petitioner having receivd a message from Lord Dunmore to attend him, he wrote a letter on the subject of it to M^r John Grymes to excuse his going but unfortunately expressive of his sentiments on the present face of things, which with the deepest sorrow he finds has raised the indignation & drawn the odium of his country on him, as a person highly inimical to its rights and liberties --

For the welfare and prosperity of this his native country no one can be more anxious nor has any american from the origin of the present unhappy contest more from principle disclaimed the right of taxation in british parliament over this continent but it has been his greatest misfortune to differ in sentiment from the mode adopted to obtain a renunciation of that unconstitutional claim --

With respect to his letter he begs to observe that it was not wrote with an intention to be published to the world, make proselytes, or influence the opinions of others, but to a private friend --

As your petitioner has never opposed the public measures, violated the association or transgressed the ordinances of this hono^{ble} house, he hopes through the lenity & indulgence of it to be released from his wretched state of confinement, & permitted to enjoy the only desirable thing in this life, liberty, but where & when he entirely throws himself upon the word of a gentleman for the future to conduct himself conformably to the measures and ordinances of this hono^{ble} house.

*Petitions, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

APPENDIX III

RALPH WORMELEY V'S SUMMARY OF HIS FAMILY AND LIFE, 1795*

Virginia Rosegill June 15th 1795

Sir,

You may be ignorant that a part of your family has long been settled in this Country--my ancestors emigrated to America, before, the troubles began in the reign of Charles the first; and have lived at this house or, rather on this estate ever since the Year 1650 or 1648.

My great Grand Father whose name was Ralph was born here, his mothers name was Elkenhead a daughter of General Elkenhead's; becoming a widow soon after he was born, She carried him to England, where he was educated; while there she married S^r Henry Chiceley Knt. of London; the marriage settlement I have in the house, her name was Agatha; she returnd after S^r Henry's death, or he might come over with her to this Country, her son being educated returned also; he was of Oxford, & afterwards at the Temple--he was appointed one of the Kings Council here, & Secretary of the Colony--Lo: Effingham Howard the Governor of Virginia lived with him here, at Rosegill: M^r Wormeley died in 1700--aged 60 Years--his eldest son Ralph succeeded him, but, dying without Issue, my Grand Father, brother

to Ralph succeeded him & heired his fortune, his name was John; who was the father of my father whose name was Ralph, he died in the year 1790--aged 75 years--I succeeded my father--I was educated in England at Eton & Cambridge, at both which seminaries was Sir Ro^{bt} D^r Arcy Hildyard, he was also at the same College of which I was a member; "Trinity Hall," if you know him, & mention my name he will probably remember and recognize me--the Bishop of London knows me, also Ed: Jennings Esq^r of Yorkshire, now of Lincoln Inn--to the present Id. Grantly I was known at Cambridge M^r William Beverley my countriman of Beverley can accurately inform you of every circumstance relative y^r family in this Country & M^r Wm. Strickland the Son of Sir George who has been here this Spring will also communicate any particulars that y^r curiosity may wish to reach--before the revolution I was one of the Kings Council & a member of the upper house of legislature, but, disapproveing of the then measures of my Country, and zealously loyal to my King, I incurred the vengeance of the ruling powers, and was banished into the back country for two years--ever since, I have lived in retirement, cultivating my lands to the best advantage, & improving them all in my power; but, not having a great command of money, I cannot carry improvement to that pitch, of which they are susceptible--well assured you are a near blood-relation, & never having heard of the name in England, except, of y^r family at Riccal, I take this opportunity of introducing myself to y^r correspondence, & should be glad to hear all particulars of you & yours in as full

detail, as you have received of mine--I am married, & have three sons
 & three daughters--I do not think we spell our name properly, the e
 between the m, & l, ought to be rejected--with every sentiment of
 respect,

I remain Sir, y^r Mo: Ob^t

Wormeley Esq.^r -

& most Humble Servant

Riccal
 Yorkshire

Ralph Wormeley

NOTES

Chapter I

1. Certificate of Admiral Samuel Barrington for the loyalist claim of James Wormeley, August 2, 1782, PRO AO 13/32 (Virginia Colonial Records Project). Barrington was referring to Ralph Wormeley IV.

2. "Genealogy of the Wormeley Family," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXXVI (1928), 98.

3. Patent of Captain Christopher Wormeley, January 27, 1638, Land Patents No. 1 1624-1642, 607, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

4. There is a theory that Christopher Wormeley, a councillor and a man of some wealth, who died in Middlesex County in 1701 was the illegitimate son of Captain Christopher Wormeley of York County (From Darrett and Anita H. Rutman's current investigation of community organization and life style in Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750, forthcoming).

5. "Wormeley Genealogy," VMHB, XXXVI (1928), 98-99.

6. Henry Norwood, "A Voyage to Virginia," in Awnsham Churchill, ed., A Collection of Voyages and Travels, VI (London, 1732), 145-170. An abridgment of this journal was published in William Maxwell, ed., Virginia Historical Register, II (1849), 129-138.

7. Patent of Captain Ralph Wormeley, June 16, 1649, Land Patents No. 2 1643-1651, Va. State Lib.

8. Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in a Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," in Thad W. Tate and David Ammerman, eds., The Seventeenth Century Chesapeake: Essays on Anglo-American Society and Politics (Chapel Hill, forthcoming). At least sixty members of the Governor's Council before 1775 were real or collateral descendants of the Eltonhead sisters (James LaVerne Anderson, "The Governor's Councils of Colonial America, A Study of Pennsylvania and Virginia, 1660-1776," [Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1967], 234).

9. Indenture of Henry Chicheley, March 2, 1677, recorded March 4, 1677, Middlesex County, Va. Deeds and Wills 1673-1680, 105-107, Virginia State Library, Richmond, hereafter Indenture of Chicheley.

10. Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom (New York, 1975) 285; G. Melvin Herndon, "Sir Henry Chicheley, Virginia Cavalier," Virginia Cavalcade, XVI (1966), 11-13.

11. C. G. Chamberlayne, ed., Vestrybook of Christ Church Parish 1663-1767 (Richmond, 1927), 5.

12. Louis B. Wright, The First Gentlemen of Virginia (Charlottesville, 1940), 188.

13. Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in Stanley Katz and Stanley Kutler, eds., New Perspectives on the American Past (Boston, 1969), 44.

14. "Wormeley Genealogy," VMHB, XXXVI (1928), 100.

15. Philip Alexander Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, II (New York, 1910), 309. Wormeley also served briefly as acting governor in 1698.

16. Gilbert Chinard, ed., A Huguenot Exile in Virginia (New York, 1934), 136-137, 142, 147-148.

17. Inventory of Ralph Wormeley, February 2, 1701, recorded November 3, 1701, Middlesex County, Va. Will Book A 1698-1713, 113-132, Virginia State Library, Richmond, hereafter cited as Inventory of Ralph Wormeley II. Wright's First Gentlemen of Virginia extensively analyzes the composition of this library.

18. Virginia White-Fitz, "Ralph Wormeley, Anonymous Essayist," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXVI (1969), 586-596. The attribution of this pamphlet to Wormeley was questioned in Carole Shammas, "Benjamin Harrison III and the Authorship of An Essay upon the Government of the English Plantations on the Continent of America," VMHB, LXXXIV (1976), 166-173. Shammas felt that the views expressed in "An Essay" were incompatible with Wormeley's neglect of his governmental duties and his flagrant violations of trade laws.

19. Rutman and Rutman, Investigation of Middlesex County (forthcoming).

20. Wormeley controlled the land office while secretary of the colony. He acquired a number of exceptional tracts of land during this period. See Shammas, "Benj. Harrison III," VMHB, LXXXIV (1976), 168.

21. Patent to Secretary Wormeley, October 25, 1695, Land Patents No. 9 1695-1706, Virginia State Library, Richmond. Wormeley originally carved out 13,500 acres for himself in Pamunkey Neck but eventually did capitulate to college pressure and allow them to take their portion. He ended up with about 5,920 acres.

22. Henry Hartwell, James Blair, and Edward Chilton, The Present State of Virginia and the College, ed. Hunter Dickinson Farish (Williamsburg, 1940), 71. The report was actually written in 1697 but it was not published until 1727.

23. Inventory of Ralph Wormeley II; Will of Ralph Wormeley, February 22, 1701, recorded April 7, 1701, Middlesex County, Va. Will Book A 1698-1713, 84-86, Va. St. Lib.

24. Robert Carter to Thomas Corbin, July 6, 1705, Wormeley Estate Papers 1701-1708, Christ Church Parish Records 1701-1788, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

25. Robert Carter to Francis Lee, December 20, 1707, ibid.

26. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, eds., The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover (Richmond, 1941), 49. Susanna Allen ran an ordinary of dubious reputation in Williamsburg.

27. "Wormeley Genealogy," VMHB, XXXVI (1928), 292. For the beginning of Ralph III's career on the court see Orders, August 11, 1712, Middlesex County, Va. Order Book 1710-1726, 92, Microfilm, Va. St. Lib.

28. Will of Ralph Wormeley, December 3, 1713, recorded April 6, 1714, Middlesex County, Va. Will Book B 1713-1734, Va. St. Lib.

29. Orders, May 9, 1723, Middlesex County, Va. Order Book 1710-1726, 71, Microfilm, Va. St. Lib.

30. The Wormeley administration of Ringfield is described in Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Ringfield Plantation (National Park Service, 1970), 41-57.

31. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, eds., The London Diary And other Writings (New York, 1958), 455. Byrd's visit at Rosegill lasted three days.

32. Entry of February 7, 1726/27, Diary of Robert Carter 1722-1727, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

33. Part of the epitaph of Wormeley's tomb at Christ Church, Middlesex reads:

H. S.
JOHANNES WORMELEY, Armiger
Rem nactus admodum amplam
a claris Majoribus antiquis loci incolis
post gravissima munia dignie administrata
in hac Aede humatis acceptus
Publicorum officiorum numquam appetens:
Quippe tranquillo privotoue Contentus Lare.

34. Chinard, ed., Huguenot Exile, 142.

35. Inventory of Ralph Wormeley II; Bruce, Institutional History of Va., II, 167.

36. Inventory of Ralph Wormeley II; The Wormeley silver collection must have been extraordinary, although it was omitted in the inventory of 1701. As of 1677 it consisted of "One Dozen of Silver Spoones, One Silver Tankard, One Silver Plate, One Silver Mustard pott, one Silver Sugar box, one Silver pepper box, One Silver Drinking Cuppe & Six Silver Salts (Indenture of Chicheley)."

37. Jonathan H. Poston, "Rosegill Plantation" (report for the Architectural Research Department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, forthcoming).

38. Provisional List of Alumni 1693-1888 (Richmond, 1941); "Wormeley Genealogy," VMHB, XXXVII (1929), 80.

39. Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), November 19, 1736. Sarah (Salley) Berkeley's great-aunt and namesake Sarah Berkeley Ring was the grandmother of Ralph Wormeley IV.

40. John Lewis to Captain Lawrence Washington, June 28, 1742, Lloyd-Smith Collection, Morristown (N. J.) National Historical Park (Microfilm at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library). This letter has been published once in Moncure Daniel Conway, Barons of the Patowmack and the Rappahannock (New York, 1892), 161-163.

41. Jane Bowles inherited the house and principal acreage at Sotterley. Along with her husband she conveyed this to her step-father George Plater for £500 sterling (Ralph and Jane Wormeley to George Plater, November 29, 1753, recorded July 19, 1754, St. Mary's County, Md. Provincial Court Deeds 16 1749-1756, 479-481, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis).

42. William Gooch to Thomas Gooch, Bishop of Norwich, June 4, 1740, William Gooch Letters 1727-1751, Private collection (Microfilm at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library).

43. "Journals of the Council of Virginia in Executive Sessions, 1737-1763," VMHB, XVI (1908), 16n-17n.

44. David John Mays, Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803; A Biography, I (Cambridge, Mass. 1952), 67-68. Dinwiddie's good relations with the burgesses disappeared during the "pistole fee" controversy.

45. Middlesex County, Va. Order Books 1745-1758, 1758-1767, 1767-1769, Microfilm, Va. St. Lib.

46. Chamberlayne, ed., Vestrybook of Christ Church Parish, 244.

47. Vestry Minutes, Christ Church Parish, Oct. 21, 1765, Berkeley Papers of Barn Elms, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

48. William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large, (Richmond, 1819-1823), VIII, 85-89. John Wormeley's will was filed in the general court and no copy has survived. Its terms were, however, explained within the body of a private bill passed in 1738.

49. Deed to Ralph Wormeley, dated and recorded August 4, 1742, Middlesex County, Va. Deed Book 1740-1754, 241-242, Va. St. Lib.

50. Grants of Ralph Wormeley, May 17, 1766, Northern Neck Grants N,4; April 2, 1768, Northern Neck Grants O, 137, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

51. Mason, Frances Norton, ed., John Norton and Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia (Richmond, 1937), 63

52. Hening, ed., Statutes, V, 88; Fairfax Harrison, "Will of Charles Carter of Cleve," VMHB, XXXII (1923), 42. Few historians realize that Charles Carter's great plantation at Cleve formerly belonged to the Wormeleys.

53. Mays, Edmund Pendleton, I, 369.

54. Robert H. Land, "The Williamsburg Theater," WMQ, 3d Ser., V (1948), 372.

55. Fairfax Harrison, The Equine F. F. V.s (Richmond, 1928), 62.

56. Ibid., 26.

57. Ibid., 60-61, 138-139.

58. The exact date of Wormeley's birth is still unknown, since there is no record of his christening in the parish records of Christ Church. His epitaph says that he was sixty-two at the time of his death on January 19, 1806.

59. Harry Toulmin, The Western Country in 1793, Reports on Kentucky and Virginia, Marion Tinling and Godfrey Davies, eds. (San Marino, 1948), 28.

60. Philip Fithian described with approval the total subjection of the Carter children to their parents. Hunter D. Farish, ed., Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774 (Williamsburg, 1957), 26.

61. Carolyn J. Weekley, "John Wollaston, Portrait Painter: His Career in Virginia 1754-1758" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1976), 1. The Wollaston portraits of the Wormeleys are now in the Virginia Historical Society.

62. Will of Elizabeth Wormeley Churchill, November 9, 1716, recorded January 1, 1717, Middlesex County, Va. Will Book B 1713-1734, 54-57, Va. St. Lib. Elizabeth Wormeley requested that her son Armistead be entrusted to the care and tutorage of Reverend Yates.

63. "The Miscellaneous Works of Francis Hargreaves in Prose and Verse," II, 1779, MS, Virginia State Library.

64. "Americans at Eton in the Eighteenth Century," Etoniana (1913), 213.

65. Richard A. Austen Leigh, The Eton College Register, 1753-1790 (Eton, 1921), xxii-xxiii.

66. Wormeley wrote to an old classmate in England asking him to present his complements to the present headmaster Dr. Davies "and pronounce while he reigns over etonian education, and etonian youth, the fame of that seminary will be as great as when a Barnard reigned" Ralph Wormeley to John Randolph Grymes, February 14, 1787, Ralph Wormeley Letterbook 1783-1802, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

67. Austen-Leigh, Eton College Register, xxviii.

68. Mrs. Mary Young, Account Book 1760-1764, MS, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

69. Richard A. Austen-Leigh, Eton Under Barnard, 1754-1765 (Eton, 1904).

70. John W. Derry, Charles James Fox (New York, 1972), 13.

71. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, December 16, 1801, Wormeley Family Papers 1791-1952, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

72. "Americans at Eton," Etoniana, 210.

73. Ralph Wormeley to ---Wormeley at Riccal, June 15, 1795, Wormeley Letterbook, University of Virginia. Hildyard was a baronet and son of Sir Robert Hildyard (1716-1781) who was briefly M.P. for Great Bedwyn [See the text of this letter in Appendix III].

74. Loren Reid, Charles James Fox, A Man for the People (London, 1969), 16.

75. Derry, Fox, 13.

76. Reid, Fox, 13.

77. "Some Virginians Educated in Great Britain," VMHB, XXI (1913), 196.

78. The painting and the Allens are briefly discussed in Robert C. Alberts, Benjamin West, A Biography (Boston, 1978).

79. Brian W. Downs, Cambridge Past and Present (London, n.d.), 175.

80. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, September 8, 1803, Wormeley Family Papers, Va. Hist. Soc.

81. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, April 24, 1802, ibid.

82. Edmund Jenings to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., August 31, 1765, Letterbook of Edmund Jenings III 1756-1769, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

Chapter II

1. Ralph Wormeley, Jr., to Landon Carter, June 10, 1768, Carter Family Papers, 1659-1797, Microfilm edition, Reel 1, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

2. Ralph Wormeley to Landon Carter, March 9, 1764, ibid.
3. Will of Elizabeth Wormeley, March 3, 1743, recorded June 2, 1761, Middlesex County, Va. Miscellaneous Wills 1675-1798, 305, Microfilm, Virginia State Library, Richmond. John Wormeley sold Ringfield in 1770 and then sold his mother's portion of Ring's Quarter to Landon Carter who already owned half of the property (Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Ringfield Plantation [National Park Service, 1970], 42; Wormeley to Carter, March 9, 1764, Carter Family Papers, Microfilm, Reel 1).
4. The sale of Elizabeth Ring Wormeley's property was scheduled for January 27, 1761. The work of the bricklayers at Rosegill was recorded several months later by Colonel James Gordon of Lancaster County in his diary (Virginia Gazette [Williamsburg], January 16, 1761; "Journal of Colonel James Gordon of Lancaster County, Va.," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., XI [1903], 224). The expansion of the house was certainly complete by 1763 when Ralph IV sold his Urbanna house to James Mills (Deed of Ralph Wormeley to James Mills, Middlesex County, Va. Deed Book 8 1754-1767, 98, Va. St. Lib.).
5. Jonathan H. Poston, "Rosegill Plantation" (unpublished Colonial Williamsburg research report, forthcoming).
6. Ralph Wormeley to John Temple, January 16, 1769, Bowdoin-Temple Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston (Microfilm at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library).
7. P. Langford, The First Rockingham Administration, 1765-1766 (Oxford, 1973), 9.
8. Francis Fauquier to Board of Trade, September 12, 1766, WMQ, 1st Ser., XXI (1912), 168-169. Fauquier merely recounted the facts of the case without comment but said "Mr. Wormeley is a gentleman whom I should have pleasure to oblige."
9. Charles Steuart to John Temple, June 29, 1765, Charles Steuart Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Microfilm at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library).
10. Thomas C. Barrow, Trade and Empire, The British Customs Service in Colonial America 1660-1775, (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 227. Barrow chronicles the problems of the American Board of Customs and finds that their operation was financially successful, but otherwise a failure.
11. Ibid., 234.

12. Wormeley to Temple, January 16, 1769. Bowdoin-Temple Papers. Temple was at odds with the other members of the American Board. He believed that "in practice the officials should do all they could to mitigate the severities of the laws of parliament." (Barrow, Trade and Empire, 236).

13. Wormeley to Temple, September 14, 1769, Bowdoin-Temple Papers.

14. Alexander MacKay (1717-1789) a son of Lord Reay was one of the all "too powerful" Scots involved in the affairs of Parliament and the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. He arrived in Boston in April 1769 (Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, The House of Commons, 1754-1790, [New York, 1964], II, 84). The involvement of MacKay with the commissioners of customs may be followed in the papers of Charles Steuart, especially MacKay's letter of July 20, 1769, (Steuart Papers, microfilm).

15. Undated note, Ralph Wormeley Papers 1773-1802, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. MacKay sailed back to England later in the month of August.

16. Wormeley to Temple, September 14, 1769, Bowdoin-Temple Papers.

17. Donald Jackson, ed., The Diaries of George Washington, II (Charlottesville, 1976), 157.

18. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Landon Carter, February 6, 1771, Carter Family Papers, Microfilm, Reel 1.

19. Joseph R. Frese, ed., "The Royal Customs Service in the Chesapeake, 1770. The Reports of John Williams, Inspector General," VMHB, LXXXI (1973), 291.

20. Ibid., 290.

21. Loyalist Claim of Ralph Wormeley, (PRO T 50/6-7 Virginia Colonial Records Project). Ralph Wormeley IV received compensation for his salary as comptroller which was £80 per year.

22. Orders, October 1, 1765, Middlesex County, Va. Order Book 1758-1767, 522, Va. St. Lib. Wormeley was not actually appointed until three years later (Orders, December 9, 1768, Middlesex County, Va. Order Book 1767-1769, 397, Va. St. Lib.).

23. C. G. Chamberlayne, ed., The Vestrybook of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County Virginia, 1663-1767 (Richmond, 1927), 333; Purdie and Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 7, 1772.

24. Wormeley, Jr. to Carter, June 10, 1768, Carter Family Papers, Microfilm, Reel 1.

25. Ibid.

26. The great exclusivity of the council is described in Jackson Turner Main, The Upper House in Revolutionary America, 1763-1788 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967), 43-49.

27. James LaVerne Anderson, "The Virginia Councilors and the American Revolution, The Demise of An Aristocratic Clique," VMHB, LXXXII (1974), 57-58. The Lees and the Nelsons, two staunchly patriot families, were still trying to obtain seats on the council in 1775. Lord Dunmore complained about these families and their methods of obtaining council seats to the Secretary of State in London (Dunmore to the Secretary of State, December 24, 1774, PRO CO 5/1373 [Va. Col. Rec. Proj.]).

28. Robert A. Brock, ed., The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lt. Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758 (Richmond, 1884), II, 375. The elder Wormeley, considering his burgess experience and personality, may not have ardently desired a council position.

29. James LaVerne Anderson, "The Governor's Councils of Colonial America, A Study of Pennsylvania and Virginia, 1660-1776" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1967), 111. Anderson's dissertation is still the best single study of the Virginia Council in the eighteenth century, although it draws several false conclusions about Ralph Wormeley V.

30. Lord Hillsborough to Governor Botetourt, April 14, 1770, PRO CO 5/1348 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

31. William Tryon to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., May 26, 1773, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. Tryon probably first met Wormeley before he went to North Carolina in 1765 and from the tone of the letter he seems to know Rosegill well. The visit may have occurred when the Tryons came to Virginia in the summer of 1769. See "Letter of Anne Blair to Martha Braxton," WMQ, 1st Ser., XVI (1908), 174-177.

32. Katherine Prescott Wormeley et al., Recollections of Ralph Randolph Wormeley (New York, 1879), 11; Jack P. Greene, ed., The Diary of Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (Charlottesville, 1965), II, 728.

33. For the practices used by the upper class to gain election to the House of Burgesses see Charles S. Sydnor, American Revolutionaries in the Making (Chapel Hill, 1952), Chapter IV.

34. A description of the elder Wormeley's dealings with Backhouse was contained in a letter from his son to Messrs. Anderson in London, September 6, 1792, Letterbook of Ralph Wormeley 1783-1802, MS, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. Hereafter cited as Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib.

35. Richard Corbin to Ralph Wormeley, June 14, 1766, Richard Corbin Letterbook 1758-1768, MS, Richard Corbin Papers 1746-1818, Colonial Williamsburg Research Library.

36. Corbin to Wormeley, October 14, 1768, ibid.

37. Tithable List of Ralph Wormeley, May 25, 1773, Wormeley Family Papers 1671-1944, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

38. Greene, ed., Diary of Landon Carter, II, 728.

39. Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," WMQ, 3d Ser., II (1954), 3.

40. Anderson, "Governors Councils," 161.

41. Ibid., 212.

42. Botetourt to Hillsborough, June 23, 1770, PRO CO 5/1333 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

43. Ibid. James Parker at Norfolk wrote to Charles Steuart that Lord Botetourt "continues to be the object of esteem with all good men." Botetourt was at the height of power and influence just a few months before his death (James Parker to Charles Steuart, Aug. 2, 1770, Steuart Papers).

44. Hillsborough to Botetourt, Oct. 3, 1770, PRO CO 5/1375 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.). Although a number of his forbears had served on the colonial council, this Dudley Digges was never appointed. He did, however, become a member of the Virginia Council of State.

45. George III in Council at St. James, Feb. 6, 1771, PRO CO 5/1334 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

46. Benjamin Hillman, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, VI (Richmond, 1966), 412. Wormeley had to take his oath again after the governor's installation (ibid., 430-443).

47. Ibid.

48. "Nelson Letterbook," WMQ, 1st Ser., VII (July 1898), 27.

49. See the chart in Karen Peacock, "The Council of the Virginia Colony, 1750-1776" (Honors thesis, William and Mary, 1976), 38.

50. Henry R. McIlwaine, ed., Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1918-1919), III, 1429.

51. Ibid., 1479. Wormeley alone was often entrusted with reporting on bills. He presented one entitled "An Act for altering the Court Days of the Counties of Surry and Princess Anne" on March 17, 1772. He made some amendments himself and these were agreed to by the council (ibid., 1457).

52. Peacock, "Council of Virginia," Main, Upper House, and Anderson, "The Colonial Governor's Councils," make a strong case for the continued power of the council and tend to refute the thesis of its decline advanced by Jack Greene in Quest For Power (Chapel Hill, 1963).

53. Hugh F. Rankin, The General Court of Colonial Virginia (Charlottesville, 1958), 38-39.

54. Quoted in Main, The Upper House, 49.

55. George III in Council at St. James, July 31, 1772, PRO CO 5/1334 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

56. Main, Upper House, 43-44, Main points out that in all of the southern colonies except Virginia, at least half the members of the council were "placemen," or men who were chosen because of their attachment to the executive by birth or because of the offices they held. Camm became a member just after he was appointed commissary by the Bishop of London.

57. Lord Dunmore to the Earl of Dartmouth, December 12, 1772, PRO CO 5/1334 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

58. Ibid.

59. John E. Selby, Dunmore (Williamsburg, 1977), 12. Dunmore maintained a town house in London for ten years while serving in the House of Lords and attempted to break into the higher circles of British politics.

60. Edward Foy to Ralph Wormeley, [July 1775], Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. This letter is particularly revealing of an intimacy between the two men. Foy accompanied Wormeley to Sabine Hall on July 27, 1774 (Greene, ed., Diary of Landon Carter, II, 836-837).

61. Quoted in Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., Letters of William Lee, (New York, 1891) I, 75-76.

62. Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., The Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774 (Williamsburg, 1943), 152, 126. Fithian noted that Colonel John Tayloe had employed a music teacher for the instruction of his daughters and one hot August morning he found the young ladies "in the Hall playing the Harpsichord."

63. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, December 16, 1801, Wormeley Family Papers, Va. Hist. Soc.

64. Greene, ed., Diary of Landon Carter, II, 724. Carter was angry at Wormeley for coming at that time to Richmond County. With characteristic insensitivity, he expected him to wait to make the trip later in the month and escort him to Rosegill for a barbecue.

65. Ralph Wormeley to Landon Carter, Sept. 24, 1772, Carter Family Papers, Microfilm, Reel 1. It is interesting that Wormeley should specifically mention Coke and Littleton since a complete set of Coke on Littleton was an important part of the library of the Virginia Council (Robert Carter to Mr. Rose, Apr. 22, 1776, Robert Carter Letter Book, III [1775-1780], MS, Duke University Library, Durham).

66. Wormeley Family Bible Records 1772-1932, Wormeley Family Papers 1671-1944, Va. Hist. Soc.

67. A fragment of Ralph Wormeley V's farm book, probably for the 1770s, has survived in the family papers at Alderman Library.

68. Purdie and Dixon's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 6, 1773.

69. Lyon G. Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, I (New York, 1915), 165. The traditional view of Wormeley is that he "became a finished scholar with tastes which ran rather to literature than to public life."

70. See the complete list in Inventory of Ralph Wormeley, February 24, 1806, recorded February 23, 1807, Middlesex County, Va. Will Book I 1796-1809, 338-352, Microfilm, Va. St. Lib. Hereafter cited as "Inventory of Ralph Wormeley V."

71. Virginia's only formal organization founded for such purposes was "The Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Sciences," and many of the members were of opposing political views from those of Wormeley ("The Miscellaneous Works of Francis Hargreaves

in Prose and Verse," II, 1779, MS, 274, Virginia State Library, Richmond).

72. Ibid., 158-159.

73. Ralph Wormeley, Jr., to Landon Carter, March 6, 1771, Carter Family Papers, Microfilm, Reel 1.

74. Greene, ed., Diary of Landon Carter, II, 728.

75. Greene analyzes Landon Carter's ungovernable temper and great obnoxiousness, which turned Sabine Hall "into a scene of 'eternal fretting at nothing and indeed quarrelling about as little.'" Carter's criticism of Wormeley is not unusual since "everywhere he looked he saw men 'intoxicated with ambition, malice, avarice, or some of the other modes of corruption.'" See ibid., 1-61.

76. Ibid., 836.

77. Edmund Jenings to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., July 29, 1769, Letterbook of Edmund Jenings III 1756-1769, MS, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

78. Robert M. Calhoun, ed., "'A Sorrowful Spectator of these Tumultuous Times': Robert Beverley Describes the Coming of the Revolution," VMHB, LXXII (1965), 41-55.

79. Edmund and Helen M. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis (Chapel Hill, 1953), 85-86.

80. Greene, ed., Diary of Landon Carter, I, 403.

81. Inventory of Ralph Wormeley V.

82. Ibid. The historical works of the libraries of Robert Carter and Thomas Jefferson are briefly listed in H. Trevor Colbourn, The Lamp of Experience (Chapel Hill, 1965), 216-221. The title pages of Landon Carter's Library are on microfilm at the Colonial Williamsburg Research Library.

83. Purdie and Dixon's, Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), Mar. 24, 1774.

84. Gary Wills, Inventing America, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (New York, 1978), 181-192.

85. Wormeley was apparently not reading the standard pro-monarch works such as Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha Or the Natural Power of Kings.

86. Robert Beverley to Landon Carter, June 9, 1774, Landon Carter Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

87. "Westward Extension 1763-1776," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, VII (April 1926), 236.

88. James Parker to Charles Steuart, January 27, 1775, Steuart Papers. Parker remarked that "he is as popular as a Scotsman can be amongst weak prejudiced people."

89. Thad W. Tate, "The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia: Britain's Challenge to Virginia's Ruling Class, 1763-1776," WMO, 3d Ser., XIX (1962), 335-336; George M. Curtis III, "The Role of the Courts in the Making of the Revolution in Virginia," in James K. Martin, ed., The Human Dimensions of Nation Making (Madison, Wisconsin, 1976), 123. "On the surface the Fee Act did not compare to major bills . . . nevertheless, it was critical to the functioning of government. Fees as part of costs in lawsuits had become so inextricably linked with judgements that the courts required legislative regulation in order to operate." Wormeley was one of the councillors specifically assigned to study the bill for continuing and amending the Act for Officers Fees on Mar. 17, 1772 (MacIlwaine, ed., Legislative Journals, III, 1457).

90. The General Court temporarily ordered that it could remain open and charge the usual fees until the legislature could act. Edmund Pendleton supported the constitutionality of this order but Jefferson disagreed. Curtis, "Role of the Courts," in Martin, ed., Human Dimensions, 124-125.

91. Edmund Pendleton to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., July 28, 1774, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. This letter was published without Wormeley's own postscript in David John Mays, ed., The Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton 1734-1803, I (Charlottesville, 1967), 96-98.

92. Pendleton to Wormeley, July 28, 1774, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. Pendleton's cautiousness was intuitively correct. The General Court was finally forced by the radicals to close in October.

93. Rind's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), June 16, 1774.

94. Greene, Diary of Landon Carter, II, 805-806. The advertisement in the Pennsylvania Gazette appeared five times between April 13, 1774 and August 10, 1774.

95. Main, "The One Hundred," WMQ, 3d Ser., II (1954), 383.

96. For a general discussion on the "court" versus "country" see Perez Zagorin, The Court & The Country (New York, 1971). The Court party's position in the 1760s is discussed in John Brooke, The Chatham Administration 1766-1768 (London, 1956), 226-227.

97. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, June 3, 1804, Wormeley Family Papers 1791-1952, Va. Hist. Soc.

Chapter III

1. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Lord Dunmore, June 22, 1775, enclosed in private letter of Dunmore to Lord Dartmouth, June 25, 1775, PRO CO 5/1353 (Virginia Colonial Records Project).

2. James Parker to Charles Steuart, April 6, 1775, Charles Steuart Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Microfilm at Colonial Williamsburg Research Library).

3. John E. Selby, Dunmore (Williamsburg, 1977), 23.

4. James Parker to Charles Steuart, May 6, 1775, Steuart Papers. Dunmore's family was not at the Palace but had been sent for safety on board the Fowey.

5. Gawin Corbin (d.1783) was appointed in 1775 after the death of John Page, Sr. Although Corbin had been educated in England and had fairly loyalist sentiments, Dunmore preferred Charles Carter of Corotoman or Philip Ludwell Grymes of Brandon over him. (Dunmore to Secretary of State, PRO CO 5/1373 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

6. Dixon and Hunter's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 6, 1775.

7. John Page, "Memoir," Virginia Historical Register, III (1850), 142-151. Portions of the Page memoir dealing with the confrontation were included in Robert L. Scribner ed., Revolutionary Virginia, The Road to Independence, III (Charlottesville, 1977), 85n-86n.

8. Page, "Memoir," Va. Hist. Reg., III, 149.

9. John Daly Burk, The History of Virginia (Petersburg, 1804-1816), III, 413.

10. Ibid. Burk's view of Wormeley is not completely reliable since he wrote at a later date with a staunchly Republican bias.

11. Dixon and Hunter's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 6, 1775.

12. Burk, History, III, 414.

13. Ibid. Burk said that the "friends of liberty" were unable to protest the signing. The names of the councillors appeared at the top of the document as presented in the Gazette but only Dunmore's name appeared at the bottom. (Dixon and Hunter's Virginia Gazette [Williamsburg], May 6, 1775).

14. Dixon and Hunter's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 20, 1775.

15. Pinckney's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), June 1, 1775. "Voluntarious" was probably James Innes, a master at the College, who lost his place with his attack on Dunmore, Byrd, Foy, Corbin, and Wormeley. See Marion Tinling, ed., The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover 1684-1776, II (Charlottesville, 1977), 549.

16. Pinckney's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), June 8, 1775.

17. James Parker to Charles Steuart, July 19, 1775, Steuart Papers. Williamsburg's vigilantes "The shirtmen" had taken over Porto Bello and were "making very free" with Dunmore's stock.

18. Dunmore to Dartmouth, June 25, 1775 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.). For a more complete discussion of the personality of Thomas Nelson see Emory G. Evan's essay "The Rise and Decline of the Virginia Aristocracy in the Eighteenth Century: The Nelsons," in Darrett B. Rutman, ed. The Old Dominion: Essays for Thomas Perkins Abernethy (Charlottesville, 1964).

19. Wormeley to Dunmore, June 22, 1775 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.). Wormeley feared that his situation would become even more dangerous "when all the forms (for the essence has long vanished) of the Constitution are abandoned."

20. James LaVerne Anderson, "The Virginia Councillors and the American Revolution, The Demise of an Aristocratic Clique," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXII (1974), 67.

21. Dunmore to Dartmouth, June 25, 1775 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.).

22. B. Edgar Joel to George Weedon, June 22, 1781, Calendar of State Papers, William P. Palmer, et al., eds. (Richmond 1875-1893), II, 179, hereafter Cal. of St. Papers.

23. See Isaac Samuel Harrell's Loyalism in Virginia (Philadelphia, 1926), 33. Harrell's book is still the best summary of the actions of the loyalists in Norfolk, and other areas throughout Virginia.

24. James Parker to Charles Steuart, October 2, 1775, Steuart Papers.

25. Edmund Foy to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., [July 1775], Ralph Wormeley Papers 1773-1802, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

26. William Byrd to Ralph Wormeley, October 4, 1775, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. Byrd felt that either Britain would defeat the colonists and punish them or the people would be so "reduced by their distresses" that they would take vengeance on the patriot leaders. This letter has been fully published in Tinling, ed., Correspondence of the Three William Byrds, II, 814-816.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. Wormeley wrote on the back of the letter that Byrd's change of heart caused him to be trusted by neither side and that "he lost everything."

29. "Virginia Legislative Papers," VMHB, XVIII (1910), 375. Grymes' older brother, Philip Ludwell, attempted to remain at Brandon and keep out of the conflict. Philip Ludwell Grymes was married to Wormeley's sister Judith.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Wormeley's "disorder" or "complaint" plagued him most of his life. See Eleanor Tayloe Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, March 9, 1806, Wormeley Family Papers 1791-1952, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

32. Keith Berwick "Loyalties in Crisis: A Study of the Attitudes of Virginians in the Revolution," (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1959), 57. Berwick's dissertation is still the best study of loyalism in Virginia. The author wrote in the aftermath of the McCarthy era and had an unusual insight to the problems of loyalism in a society at war.

33. Foy to Wormeley, [July 1775], Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib.

34. Berwick, "Loyalties in Crisis," 64.

35. Harrell, Loyalism in Virginia, 44-45. Levin Powell wrote in 1776 that "the women and children whose behaviour makes them think it dangerous to remain on shore and are now on board Dunmore's ships have been obliged to send to our officers begging provisions and firewood."

36. Dixon and Hunter's Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), May 4, 1776.

37. H. J. Eckenrode, The Revolution in Virginia (1916, reprinted Hamden, Connecticut, 1964) 146.

38. Petition of Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to the Virginia Convention, May 13, 1776, Petitions, Va. St. Lib.

39. Lorenzo D. Sabine, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists, II (Boston, 1864), 456.

40. "Miscellaneous Colonial Documents," VMHB, XIX (1911), 370.

41. Ibid. Eckenrode thought Wormeley's petition was completely sincere. He believed that Ralph V's imprisonment "had oppressed him with a sense of isolation and finally weakened his fervent devotion to the royal side." (Eckenrode, Revolution in Virginia, 146-147).

42. Ibid.

43. Randolph's proposals are fully discussed in Mary Beth Norton, The British-Americans, The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774-1789 (Boston, 1972), 186.

44. "Genealogy of the Wormeley Family," VMHB, XXXVII (1929), 84. James Wormeley later was recommended for a captaincy in the Staffordshire militia by Lord Dunmore. He was stationed at Warley Camp near Windsor until 1783 [see Loyalist claim of James Wormeley, 1782, PRO AO 13/32 (Va. Col. Rec. Proj.)].

45. "Wormeley Genealogy," VMHB, XXXVII (1929), 86.

46. Berwick, "Loyalties in Crisis," 117-118. Colonel William Woodford objected to wholesale evacuation and only removed the worst of Dunmore's supporters.

47. Wallace Brown, The King's Friends (Providence, 1965), 180; John A. George, "Virginia Loyalists." Richmond College Historical Papers, I (1916), 207.

48. George M. Curtis, "The Goodrich Family and the Revolution in Virginia, 1774-1776," VMHB, LXXIV (1976), 53.

49. Berwick, "Loyalties in Crisis," 31-32.

50. Elizabeth Hawes Ryland, "The Roanes of King and Queen and King William Counties," William and Mary Quarterly, 2d Ser., XVIII

(1938), 288. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Charles Steuart, July 15, 1786, Steuart Papers. Wormeley wrote to Steuart on Mrs. Neilson's behalf asking that he help the family obtain relief.

51. Berwick, "Loyalties in Crisis," 133. "In a different sort of Revolution, Wormeley and others who were exiled might have been executed or they might not have been apprehended at all. In Virginia even the discreetly disaffected were sought out and then punished by non-violent measures."

52. Jack P. Greene, ed., The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (Charlottesville, 1965), II, 1029. Carter, as usual, failed to understand the subtleties of his nephew's personality and preferred to ascribe to him the worst motives.

53. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Edmund Wilcox, May 18, 1776, Hubbard Papers 1741-1907, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

54. Diary of Ralph Wormeley V 1776-1777, MS, contained in "The Virginia Almanac, 1776," collection of Mrs. Burnett (Anne Williams) Britton, San Francisco, California.

55. Entries of May 29, 1776 and June 1, 1776, Wormeley Diary, Collection of Mrs. Burnett Britton.

56. The house was described in Ralph V's advertisement for the sale of his western lands in 1774 as "a good stone house, 2 stories high, with 2 rooms on a floor, a kitchen, dairy and all other convenient outhouses" (Rind's Virginia Gazette [Williamsburg], June 16, 1774). The kitchen building at The Rocks still survives and is the back of the present main house (Millard K. Bushong, Historic Jefferson County [Boyce, Virginia, 1972], 157).

57. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Richard Corbin, June 11, 1786, Letterbook of Ralph Wormeley 1783-1802, Wormeley Papers, Alderman Lib. Hereafter Wormeley Letterbook.

58. Entries of Dec. 23, 1775, Sept. 18, 1775, & Sept. 21, 1775, Wormeley Diary, Collection of Mrs. Burnett Britton.

59. Entry of Oct. 7, 1775, ibid.

60. Wormeley Family Bible Records 1772-1932, Wormeley Family Papers, 1671-1944, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

61. Entry of September 1777. Wormeley Diary, Collection of Mrs. Burnett Britton.

62. Entry of September 1776, ibid.

63. Entry of December 14, 1776, ibid.

64. Journals of the Council of State of Virginia, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., I (Richmond, 1931), 312. Wormeley's petition was presented at a council meeting on January 13, 1777.

65. Ibid.

66. "Legislative Papers," VMHB, VIII (1920), 374.

67. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Mann Page, May 11, 1778, Cal. of St. Papers, Palmer, et al., eds., I, 300. Wormeley did not want to take the Oath of Abjuration but Page wrote and suggested that he do so. (Mann Page to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., June 1, 1778, Wormeley Family Papers, Alderman Lib.).

68. Eckenrode, Revolution in Va., 255-256. In the early part of the war the Virginia navy had prevented the actions of such pirates but with the navy's demise in the invasion of 1781, the pirates enjoyed free rein.

69. Letter of Wormeley, (undated), Cal. of St. Papers, Palmer et al., eds., I, 301. The slaves stolen included a tailor, a wheelwright, a blacksmith, and a pastry cook named Lawrence who was worth £150 sterling. (Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Secretary of State [Charles James Fox], Aug. 8, 1783, PRO CO 5/1344 [Va. Col. Rec. Proj.]).

70. Petition to Governor Nelson, September 8, 1781, Cal. of St. Papers, Palmer et al., eds., II, 404.

71. Ibid., II, 405.

72. Thomas C. Williams to Frederick Rhinelander, 1781, ibid., II, 691-692. The family's finances were already precarious, since the expense of Wormeley's confinement had been five hundred pounds (Letter of Wormeley [undated], ibid., I, 301).

73. Major B. Edgar Joel to Brigadier-General George Weedon, July 21, 1781, ibid., II, 178.

74. Petition, September 8, 1781, ibid., II, 405. William Hannah to Governor Nelson, September 22, 1781, ibid., 460.

75. Petition, Sept. 8, 1781, ibid., 405.

76. Governor Nelson to Ralph Wormeley, Jr., September 14, 1781, ibid., II, 427.

77. Governor Nelson to ?, September 18, 1781, ibid., II, 456.

78. Ralph Wormeley to Governor Nelson, October 15, 1781, ibid., II, 549.

79. James Anderson incorrectly assumed in his article that Wormeley pursued a neutral course from 1778 until 1781 when he became a patriot (Anderson, "Virginia Councillors," VMHB, LXXXII [1974], 69.)

80. Berwick, "Loyalties in Crisis," 66; "Military Claims in Middlesex County," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, VII (1925), 109-110.

81. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Charles James Fox, August 16, 1783, Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib. Wormeley admitted in the letter that he and Fox had lost contact over the years. He pointed out that he was not writing to attempt to rekindle their friendship but in order to enlist Fox's aid in the recovery of his remaining stolen slaves.

82. Ralph Wormeley to Messrs. Donald & Burton, January 7, 1786, Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib.

Epilogue

1. Ralph Wormeley to John Rutledge, Jr., February 25, 1802, Rutledge Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

2. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to John Tuberville, December 20, 1783, Letterbook of Ralph Wormeley 1783-1802, Ralph Wormeley Papers 1773-1802, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, hereafter cited as Wormeley Letterbook. Tuberville, a planter in Westmoreland, was responsible for a rather substantial debt to Wormeley and there were repeated attempts to collect it.

3. Through repeated petition the Wormeleys were finally able to secure a pardon for John. He arrived in New York in 1783 and eventually settled at "Cool Spring" in Frederick County. See his correspondence in the purchased group of Wormeley Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. James Wormeley made repeated attempts at a better position in the British army, but he finally returned with his wife Ariana in 1785. They settled at "The Rocks" but after her death a decade later he traded the estate with Ferdinando Fairfax for property in England (Deed of

Wormeley to Fairfax, June 24, 1797, recorded October 9, 1797, Frederick County, Va. Superior Court Deed Book 2 1793-1796, 346-351, Microfilm, Virginia State Library, Richmond).

4. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Messrs. Forest & Stoddard, July 2, 1784, Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib, Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to St. George Tucker, March 10, 1789, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

5. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to Richard Corbin, June 13, 1786, Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib.

6. Ralph Wormeley, Jr. to John Grymes, 1787, ibid.
In this letter Ralph V praised John Adam's work on "balances" and explained that, although a central leader would be needed, "to create a monarch here would be as preposterous as we thought the deposition of one."

7. Henry Lee to James Madison, December 7, 1787, James Madison Papers, Microfilm, Series 1, Reel 3, Library of Congress.

8. Ralph V's role in the ratification of the Constitution in the Commonwealth is revealed in the Journal of the Virginia Ratifying Convention of 1788, Microfilm, Reel 443, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

9. "Letters of Thomas Jefferson to William Short," William and Mary Quarterly, 2d Ser., XII (1932), 291.

10. Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser (Richmond), October 12, 1796. Wormeley, despite his plea for election in the newspaper, still tried to remain above the indignities of popular politics. He added as a postscript "N.B. The day of the election is I believe, the 1st Monday in November."

11. Jonathan H. Poston, "Rosegill Plantation" (unpublished Colonial Williamsburg Research Report, forthcoming).

12. Ralph Wormeley to Thomas Reeves, February 5, 1801, and May 17, 1801, Wormeley Letterbook, Alderman Lib. Wormeley was particularly interested in women's education and had in his library Erasmus Darwin's A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in boarding schools, private families and public seminaries (Philadelphia, 1798).

13. Ibid.

14. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, February 17, 1804, Wormeley Family Papers 1791-1952, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

15. Wormeley to Rutledge, Feb. 25, 1802, Rutledge Papers.
16. Ralph Wormeley to Warner Lewis Wormeley, May 16, 1803, Wormeley Family Papers, Va. Hist. Soc.

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